STANDING STRONG TOGETHER
Dames Make the World a Better Place
Embracing Life During A Pandemic

The year 2020 began with great promise, then a global pandemic changed everything. The summer issue reflects this “new reality” offering rich, meaningful content to help you navigate in uncertain times. The feature “Standing Strong Together” highlights extraordinary Dames providing humanitarian assistance for the most vulnerable among us and supporting frontline medical superheroes like Registered Nurse Sara Danesin, a London Dame caring for coronavirus patients. (Watch for Part Two in the fall issue.)

Managing the stress of social isolation requires changing a stressful situation or changing our reaction to it. It’s difficult to control a pandemic, so stay-at-home Dames are practicing mindfulness through the pastimes of gardening and home baking. In a Facebook post Cynthia Nims (Seattle) says, “I feel like some baking fiend has taken over my body—I have been baking SO MUCH more in the last few months than the last couple of decades.” (I hear Cynthia has been sewing masks too.)

The UK had a frenzy for making banana bread, according to Reuters. As a few anxious world shoppers stock up on bathroom tissue, the French are buying up baguettes—a symbol of cultural exceptionalism—and even baking their own, upsetting supply chains. King Arthur Flour says in March, flour sales increased 600 percent practically overnight. Mixing cookie dough or kneading sourdough is therapeutic; the pleasurable results serve as immediate comfort in trying times.

In today’s circumstances, a warm chocolate chip cookie is as satisfying as a hug.

That brings to mind hygge (hyoo-guh) a nuanced Danish concept that embraces coziness, comfortable conviviality, and well-being. Tricky to pronounce, etymologists think hygge might be associated with a Danish word for hug. Hygge celebrates the art of cocooning, vital for coping with Denmark’s long, dark winters. (the shortest day being seven hours.) The energy of hygge can also carry Dames through the pandemic. Experience hygge in solitude while reading this 20th anniversary issue in a cozy spot and sipping a cup of hot tea. Physically isolated groups of Dames use digital platforms to socialize and build meaningful connections—their hygge experience is like a group hug. However it unfolds around you, hygge is easy to recognize. “You don’t spell it, you feel it,” Winnie the Pooh remarked to Piglet on love. Think about hygge only enough to welcome and invite it in.

—Susan Fuller Slack, Editor, Summer Quarterly
Revisiting Resilience... Because We Didn’t Realize How Resilient We Needed to Be!

As I write this, months before you’ll actually read the piece, we are in the midst of a surreal pandemic that has and will continue to change our lives. The impact on our industries—food, fine beverage, hospitality—has been devastating. So many of you rose to the challenges you encountered—adapting and adjusting your business model as you were able—and lifted the spirits of others with your help and support.

At this point, the Strategic Plan Task Forces have begun their work and the LDEI Board of Directors, having canceled a face2face June Board meeting due to COVID-19, is taking on the challenge of envisioning what our 2020 Annual Conference will look like. By the time you read this, we will have answers and will have begun the process of restrengthening our membership and organization.

That being said, I thought we’d revisit those secrets of resilience since—as we have proven time and time again—we Dames are a resilient and compassionate group of strong women.

We all know that resilience is the ability to rebound quickly from a crisis or trauma. Highly resilient people don’t fall apart—at least not for long. They somehow call on their inner strength and recruit outside resources to keep moving forward. They tweak their future expectations to fit their reality.

According to Yale University’s professor of psychiatry Steven M. Southwick, MD, “Resilient people are like trees bending in the wind—they bounce back.” And recent studies show that certain genes may protect you against the emotional back draft of trauma. “Some people are naturally more resilient,” says Robert Brooks, Ph.D., from Harvard Medical School.

“If the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.” —Maya Angelou

Like most behaviors, however, resilience can also be learned. In fact, some research has shown that resilient people share some common qualities—ones you can cultivate to master any crisis.

They pick their battles. Resilient people tend to focus on things over which they have some influence and not spend time on things they cannot control. Refocus that energy!

They stay healthy. A good diet and regular physical activity provide crucial buffers against stress. “Exercise literally helps to repair neurons in brain areas that are particularly susceptible to stress,” says Dr. Southwick.

They find the silver lining. Somehow, someway, resilient people convert misfortune into good luck and gain strength from adversity. It’s often referred to as post-traumatic growth syndrome.

So, how resilient are you?

• Are you usually upbeat?
• Can you tolerate high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty about situations?
• Do you adapt quickly to new developments?
• Can you find humor in rough situations and laugh at yourself?
• Do you learn valuable lessons from your experiences and from the experiences of others?
• Are you good at solving problems?
• Do you consider yourself strong and durable?
• Have you been able to or will you be able to convert misfortune into good luck, finding benefit in bad experiences?

If, during these surreal times, you can say yes to most of these you are a self-motivated and resilient Dame.

“Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.” —Melody Beattie

You all make me proud to be a Dame…but more important than that, I am humbled and honored to call you my friends.

Bev Shaffer
President, LDEI
Cleveland Chapter
#ldeigratitude
Les Dames d’Escoffier International

BIRMINGHAM DAMES RAISE THEIR HANDS TO HELP
By Martha Johnston

When the future of food changed earlier this spring, Birmingham Dames committed to using their talents and skills to bring together our community. We have our Les Dames Virtual Happy Hour each Monday at 5 p.m. where we can see each other, talk, and laugh for a while. It keeps us optimistic.

Leigh Sloss-Corra and her Pepper Place Market team got an early start after the Alabama shutdown. The traditional market was turned into a drive-through operation and kept farmers in business and customers fed while becoming a model for others...creative thinking at its best!

Idie Hastings, and husband Chris, teamed up with Senator and Mrs. Doug Jones to deliver meals from OvenBird to the heroes taking care of COVID-19 patients at St. Vincent’s Hospital. Not only has Kristen Farmer Hall been feeding workers at several area hospitals, she’s managed to keep The Essential open for pop-ups. Becky Satterfield, owner of Satterfield’s Restaurant and El ZunZun, regularly feeds UAB’S Palliative and Comfort Care Unit but also has been sending dinner to healthcare workers.

Telia Johnson is making life sweeter for frontline heroes by dropping off some of her amazing chocolate layer cakes for staff at UAB hospital and firefighters in Homewood including some decorated with icing that say: "Don't touch your..."
face!” Linda Croley contributed baked ziti [handmade pasta] and gift bags of Bare Naked Noodles products for 650 healthcare workers in 35 departments at a local hospital to take home as a “thanks.”

Debbie Mar was at the forefront of a local effort that went national. Now all Newk’s Eatery locations are teaming up with corporate and regular customers to get Hero Box Meals to essential workers across the country. Maureen Holt is delivering her Southern Graze meals to the family of a nurse at UAB, feeding her boys and her sister so this healthcare hero doesn’t have to worry about them.

Rebecca Williamson took her young family to box up and deliver food to West End residents. Barbara Gaines Kenyon has created the Happy City Box filled with items from local makers and small businesses: Kay Bruno Reed’s delicious Iz Granola is included; Linda Croley’s pasta is, too. And there are gift cards for Ashley McMakin’s tasty Ashley Mac’s foods and Geri-Marta O’Hara’s amazing Big Spoon Creamery ice cream.

Pardis Stitt, a restaurateur, along with UAB health experts, Jefferson County Public Health Officials, and industry representatives worked to develop Birmingham Restaurant Reopening Guidelines to make sure customers can feel safe and confident.

**BOston strong**

*By Amanda Arrigotti-White*

As we are unable to connect in person, the Les Dames Boston Chapter has been organizing creative ways for members to connect and lift one another up during this time. Zoom happy hours and brunches (complete with mimosas and margaritas) have become a new staple in our schedules! These digital events are an opportunity for members to support one another, share local news, and brainstorm new ways we can stimulate our industries. The Boston Chapter is also using this time to revamp digital efforts. We have been planning a website relaunch that will help us connect with current and potential members more effectively. We are also happy to report that many of our members’ businesses have adapted quickly to the changing landscape and are open for takeout or delivery. Our chapter has been promoting these businesses to members and partners in an effort to drive traffic to them and support our community through this difficult time. Last but not least, our chapter members have used this newfound time at home to create new recipes! From the perfect margarita to delicious sourdough starters, we have found joy in fresh ingredients and taste-testing new recipes.

**BRITISH COLUMBIA: FUNDRAISING FOR CHARITY**

*By Karen Dar Woon*

In British Columbia, a public health order in late March closed all liquor-only services, including winery tasting rooms. Restaurants were ordered to offer take away and delivery services only. Even farm shops were in jeopardy. Our members are contributing to their broader community, whilst juggling work-from-home, elder care, childcare, and industry consultation. Here is just a small sampling:

Angie Quaale, a chapter past co-president and owner of Well Seasoned: A Gourmet Food Store, has provided over 1000 free meals to the Langley Memorial Hospital staff. Each week, fresh, nutritious meals are distributed weekly to various hospital departments and community first responders. Angie and her team were prepared to cater the sold-out, annual Langley Hospice Gala, but it was jeopardized by a health order prohibiting gatherings. A brilliant brainstorm resulted in “Plates and Glasses—Gala to Go.” Leveraging sponsor contributions, Angie created, prepared, and packaged five-course meals, which were delivered with a bottle of wine by festively attired, masked volunteer drivers. Diners were encouraged to connect with each other via Zoom. Ticket revenues flowed to the Hospice Society. Kudos to Angie and her team!

Jenice Yu’s retail shops, Fresh Ideas Start Here, remained open as food providers. She now partners with local restaurants, offering their sauces frozen for take-home use. Christine Blackwood’s made-in-Canada uniform company added non-medical cotton masks to their production in early April.

Mireille Sauvé, a chapter past president and founder of The Wine Umbrella has taken to Self-Isolation Virtual Wine Tasting videos to keep the buzz alive about the fundraising wines she makes to benefit BC’s Chapter Scholarship Fund. “All we can work with is what we’ve got,” says Mireille, “so if I can’t pour wine into people’s glasses, then I guess this is the next best thing.”

Linda Seifert, owner of Snow Cap Enterprises Ltd., one of BCs leading bakery supply distributors, is raising hope through flour sales. A contribution of 25 cents from the sale of each bag goes to support the BC Hospitality Foundation (Executive Director Dana Harris) and the Vancouver Food and Beverage Community Relief Fund.

Barb Finley’s Project CHEF offers thousands of hours each year of in-class programming teaching kids about healthy food. In just a few short weeks, they produced invaluable on-line resources for teachers and parents to use at home. Stephanie Jaeger of the PearTree Restaurant contributed expert advice to the BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association guidelines for restarting restaurant operations. Sandra Oldfield continues to provide critical health, safety, and operations advice to wineries and beverage operations.

**Charleston: strengthening the safety net**

*By Susan F. Slack*

On March 18, South Carolina required bars and restaurants to close all in-house services to combat the COVID-19 virus outbreak. The Charleston Dames took action in April and launched Vital Hospitality CHS, a fundraising and service program for COVID-19 recovery. The mission: to provide nourishing, hot meals for frontline medical teams and to support the local restaurant community in this task. Organizer Megan Deschaine — supported by team members Susan Wigley, Amanee Neirouz, Angie DuPree, and Tanya Gurrieri—says, “Our goal has been to con-
connect the needs of our front-line heroes with Charleston's independent restaurants. Members of our chapter contributed to launching this program, and we made way for area residents and businesses to become involved.” She adds, “If there is another spike in the coronavirus, we will be ready. This platform can be leveraged in the future to provide assistance when other situations arise.”

Charleston Dames and Vital Hospitality have distributed hot meals and baked goods to first responders throughout the Lowcountry hospital system. Produce, packaging materials, and innumerable volunteer hours have also been donated. By mid-June, $4,000 had been invested back into the community. Participating Dames include Kelly Chu (Red Orchids China Bistro); Carrie Morey (Callie’s Hot Little Biscuit); Katherine Frankstone (Grey Ghost Bakery); Tanya Gurrieri (Salt-house Catering); Emma Lesesne-Booth (Duvall Catering); and Katie Hajjir (The Macintosh).

To help support Charleston’s social safety net, Kelly Franz (on the cover) generously donated her entire coronavirus stimulus check to two charities—the Vital Hospitality initiative and One80Place, a homeless services center where Angela DuPree (Chapter Vice President) is the Director of Operations.

Ohio was one of the first states to close all restaurants and bars (at 9 p.m. on Sunday, March 15, to be exact). Shortly after, our chapter cancelled an educational tea tasting meeting set for the following Sunday, which was to be hosted by Dame Paula Hershman of Storehouse Teas. However, we quickly filled the void with our Virtual Happy Hours. Countless Happy Hours later, this has become the highlight of the week for many of us. We gather for just an hour, chatting and making sure we are all well. The Virtual Happy Hour, though superficial, provides an hour-long weekly touchstone. But we are reaching out in other ways, too.

In times of calamity, Dames naturally want to help. The chapter found out that many restaurant-owning Dames, despite being closed to all but carry-out, were finding ways to provide food for first responders and procuring funding through public donations and out of their own pockets. The Board decided to divert our grant program to three micro-grants, to aid our

But what we are most proud of is our $5000 donation in April to The Lee Initiative, which was established by chef and author Edward Lee in 2017 to provide support and mentorship to up-and-comers in our industry. After assessing multiple organizations to lend our support to, it was clear that this organization was filling a huge need in Chicago providing free meals and other services for restaurant and hospitality workers in need. And they desperately needed dollars to keep the services flowing.

Upon learning of the donation, Chef Lee said, “You guys rock! I am so touched that your organization is giving us such a generous amount. Cannot thank you enough. When things smooth over, I would love to connect our groups together as we have a mentor program for Women Chefs. Thank you, thank you!”

A natural way to support the LDEI mission. Additionally, many Dames have stepped up to physically help one another, so the ripples can continue outward to our first responders. More than one Cleveland Dame has brought groceries (and wine, to be honest) to LDEI workers in need. And they desperately needed dollars to lend our support to, it was clear that this organization was filling a huge need in Chicago providing free meals and other services for restaurant and hospitality workers in need. And they desperately needed dollars to keep the services flowing.

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Meal preparation at Touch A Heart Hawaii foundation.
in business. Many of our members have adapted their offerings and services to enable them to continue operating, albeit at a greatly reduced profit.

Robin Kumabe runs a foundation called Touch A Heart Hawaii. It provides informal social services, mentorship and tutoring, meals to homeless individuals and families, as well as a food service training and apprenticeship program that uses underutilized commercial kitchens. As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, the Kupuna & Family Meal Program has recently been implemented. It is a weekly meal service helping those who are having difficulty accessing food, as well provide on-the-job training to our culinary students and employment for our graduate apprentices, while limiting contact as much as possible.

Dawn Sakamoto Paiva has partnered with a local videographer to offer free one-minute videos for our members to promote or advertise their businesses.

As a chapter, we have shifted our quarterly Salon Series of workshops into an online offering, presenting speakers who can give advice on everything from adapting their business models to how to apply for loans and assistance. We are holding monthly Pau Hana (after work) Zoom sessions to provide an open forum for members to network, socialize, and just “talk story” about how they are and if they need anything from one another. Social media will be utilized to highlight individual members and celebrate their achievements and milestones.

It is so important for us all to know we’re in this together, and that we are all resources for each other during this challenging time.

The Hawaiian cultural expression “talk story” means connecting through authentic conversations to share experiences and learn from each other. It builds upon the aloha spirit and bonds friends for life. —Editor.

GREATER MADISON: BELIEVE, INSPIRE, GROW
By Nicole R. Bujewski (Chapter President)

I’ve been a member of the Chicago Chapter for some time and have met wonderful women in all areas of food and beverage. Recently, my husband and I moved to the Greater Madison area, and I thought I’d simply transfer my membership to the Madison Chapter. Surprise—a chapter did not exist! I told a fellow Dame my dilemma and she suggested that I just start a chapter. Well, that would have been easy, but I didn’t know one person in Madison, so how should I start? Like the snowball effect, when you tell one person, you end up with 19 women who are interested in founding and forming a new chapter! In 2019, Kara Bresnahan, Susan Parenti, Pamela Reardon and I began to reach out to the amazing women of Madison. At the eleventh hour on December 15, 2019, our application to LDEI was submitted. On March 6, 2020, the Greater Madison Chapter was established. In celebration, we planned to gather at the Wisconsin State Capitol building for a photo followed by a Champagne toast at our very own, Andrea Hillsley’s Square Wine Co. and then...well, you know the rest. With respect to social distancing, we used this time to organize and gather our thoughts on how to pioneer our chapter. What should it feel like? What do we want to experience? What do we offer to our dynamic members? How do we give back to our community, farmers, restaurants, food establishments, and to all of the others that make Madison, Wisconsin, a food destination? We are just now beginning to fill in these blanks and have created a communications committee that features a member spotlight. Our first highlight, Liz Griffith of Door Creek Orchard shared with us how her business has adapted to the pandemic. Liz also recently shared her story at the LDEI Virtual Brunch event in June. The Madison Dames plan to really “kick-off” later this summer! Stay tuned!

KENTUCKY: FEEDING THE HEARTLAND
By Susan Reigler (Chapter President)

Kentucky DAME-owned businesses are still helping feed the public during this very stressful time. In Louisville, curbside meal pickups are provided by LDKY-owned Brasserie Provence (Stacy Duncan), Farm to Fork Café and Catering (Sherry Hurley), Lilly’s Kentucky Bistro (Kathy Cary), and Noosh Nosh (Paula Barmore). Ouita Michel has created take-out menus for Holly Hill Inn and her other Lexington-area restaurants.

Our member farmers, including Capriole (Judy Schad), Craig’s Creek (Pennry Craig), Fox hollow Farm (Maggie Keith), Freedom Run (Valerie Samutin), Rivercrest (Holli Willig) and Spade & Table Farms (Lisa Windhorst)—variously supplying meat, dairy, and vegetable producers—are finding ways to get food to the community either through the donation of products, direct sales, or the creation of produce subscription services.

Advanced sommelier Julie DeFriend and executive bourbon steward Susan Reigler have been conducting virtual tastings of wine and spirits. So, even if we don’t get out much like the famously reclusive poet Emily Dickenson, the Kentucky Dames are still busy! And we send very best wishes to all our members worldwide.

LONDON: STAY STRONG & CARRY ON

A nationwide shutdown in the UK began March 23 to stop the coronavirus spread. Edible London—one of LDEI London’s major fundraisers—was scheduled for May but has been postponed until next year. Chapter Secretary/Treasurer Sue Carter wrote, “It has been quite a wild ride getting everything unraveled, but we’re at the point where we can mothball it for several months.” Happily, the new dates have been set for 2021, which encompasses three consecutive tours: Galway, Ireland, May 6-10; London, May 12-17; and the Cotswolds, May 17-21. Sue, President Jacqui Pickles, and Anne Dolamore will send updates in the fall.

The London event will include a day trip to the renowned School of Artisan Food at Welbeck in Nottinghamshire. Dame Alison Swan Parente, founder of the school and lady of the Manor at Welbeck Abbey, will be there to welcome guests. An activity-filled visit to the school was one memorable highlight of Edible London 2018.

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In a charity update, Sue says the chapter donated the net proceeds from their International Women’s Day event to The Felix Project, which is a food rescue. The surplus food is distributed to charities that feed vulnerable people. They also donated to “Refettorio Felix, a community kitchen with restaurant-style service. Sue adds, “It offers a safe space with a daily three-course meal to those who need it the most. This is one of celebrated, Italian Chef Massimo Bottura’s Refettorie…We were able to give them £500 each, which, given the current circumstances, is just a drop in the ocean when so many more people are now falling off a financial cliff…We would have increased our donations to both [charities] out of the Edible London proceeds, but that is a pipe dream—for now.”

Sue says ever since the declaration to “stay at home” the London Dames have been doing just that. Individual members are helping within their communities. Some are blogging and teaching or doing demos virtually. The Dames have met several times through Zoom calls. At the moment, the London Chapter has only one Dame restaurateur.

Busy Dame Sara Danesin, a 2011 Master Chef finalist and owner of York’s first Supper Club, is also a Registered Nurse at the “Royal Free,” a major teaching hospital in the London Borough of Camden, where she has been working on the front line. “My experience as a nurse during the pandemic was very challenging and intense,” confides Sara. “I worked on both acute medical and intensive care departments experiencing first-hand the sheer force of COVID-19 on patients and their families, as well as on all frontliners and the National Health Service (NHS) system as a whole.” As a result, Sara secured a permanent position as staff nurse on critical care. She adds, “Of course this will not prevent me from pursuing some of my chef consultant streams of work including monthly supper club events, and private teaching and catering.” We all send our heartfelt thanks to Sara for her dedication and selfless service to the greater community—Susan Slack, Editor.

**MEXICO: SUPPORTING WOMEN**

*By Marie Gómez-Laurens (Mexico Chapter, San Diego Chapter president)*

The Mexico Chapter has been dealing with the COVID-19 virus in ways similar to other chapters. In June, Mexico Dames hosted a video conference focused on “Mindful Eating During the Pandemic.” Veronica Castro is one of the founding members of the LDEI Mexico Chapter. She has been incredibly involved in helping other women in the coffee industry such as the coffee growers and roasters, as well as working to regulate fair pay. Café Diamansol, her company, has seen a decrease in the amount of coffee sold, however, she is still maintaining minimum orders and is able to make certain that these women receive pay.

Veronica’s exceptional coffee has been featured at events during the Flavors of Mexico. For additional information, you can email Veronica at emailventas@diamansol.com.—Editor.

**NASHVILLE: THE POWER OF DAMES IN ACTION**

*By Nancy Vienneau (Chapter President)*

This March, Nashville experienced a one-two punch: a catastrophic tornado on the 3rd of March followed, two weeks later, by the shutdown necessitated by the COVID-19 virus. In the storm’s aftermath, our chapter mobilized quickly: We passed out hot coffee, biscuits, and churros to first responders in East Nashville. We organized, prepared, and served a hot buffet lunch for 1000 in a hard-hit neighborhood of North Nashville. We made 1000 box lunches that Second Harvest Food Bank delivered to a devastated rural community. We provided hot meals for the Red Cross Disaster Relief Shelter. We even bought a new refrigerator for a neighborhood food pantry. After March 17, the pandemic forced us to put that outreach on hold.

We have been feeling our way, and staying connected at a distance. (Social media has played a key role.) We’ve been sharing information on how to help one another: who is providing take-out/curbside service, gift cards, grocery boxes, CSAs, and merchandise. Who is teaching online cooking classes and giving online demos. How hospitality workers can get aid.

We’ve held board meetings on Zoom and have Dame Virtual Happy Hours to provide fellowship. When it becomes safe, we plan to return to The Nashville Food Project and Second Harvest Food Bank to assist—hands on—with hunger relief initiatives. And we will be turning our attention to our own members whose livelihoods have been damaged by the economic shutdown. We are dedicating a portion of our scholarship monies that fund our Career Advancement Grants to helping them. And we’ll find other ways support and promote one another, as “the new normal” continues to unfold.

**MINNESOTA: WORKING TO RELIVE HUNGER**

*By Joan Donatelle (Chapter Co-President)*

After our first few successful virtual meetings, we decided to continue on...to strengthen the bonds of culinary sisterhood during this difficult time! Thanks to the organizing skills of Araceli Ramos (chapter president) and Veronica Castro. A May 22 Virtual Happy Hour featured Famiglia Meschini wines from Mendoza Argentina. Owner Teresa Meschini, a Minnesota resident, shared her story. A June virtual event featured a moderated panel discussion on how Minnesota Dames “shifted gears” as a result of the pandemic.

As the global pandemic reached Minnesota, Dames Heidi Andermack, Amy Brown, and Emily Paul started an impressive program to prepare and package meals for the hungry. Partnering with Second Harvest Heartland, Heidi and Amy turned their Chowgirls Killer Catering kitchens into Minnesota Central Kitchen. Emily, the Managing Director of Minnesota Central Kitchen, was inspired by humanitarian and chef José Andrés. The program puts furloughed restaurant chefs to work and rescues food before it becomes waste. Minnesota Dames contributed the remaining $1,500 of their Micro-Grant funds to this important endeavor.
NEW ENGLAND’S GIVING KITCHENS

The New England Dames have stayed in touch virtually during the coronavirus pandemic while providing outreach services to those in need. Nancy Matherson-Burns owns Dole & Bailey Food Hub in Woburn, Mass. The company worked seamlessly to put creative solutions into action for all their business segments that remained operational. The framework of the Home Delivery program shifted from chef-centric products to home cooks, with items being packaged in more manageable sizes. The company assists Lydias’s House of Hope, a shelter for women in New Hampshire. Working with Lovin’ Spoonfuls (a food rescue), a weekly food donation program has been created to target homeless shelters, food pantries, domestic violence agencies, senior centers, soup kitchens, and school programs with sourcing from local farms, distributors, and retailers.

Irene Li is the chef/owner of Boston’s Mei Mei, a farm-to-table Chinese-American restaurant. She is a six-time nominee for James Beard’s Rising Star Chef award. The coronavirus pandemic was a call to action for Irene. Her humanitarian projects include launching the Unsung Restaurants Fund to assist immigrant restaurants and joining the grassroots organization Off Their Plate to lead a grocery program for healthcare workers. She donates regularly on behalf of her staff members to organizations of their choosing. Irene has been teaching dumpling-making classes virtually, guiding students at home who are using their own ingredients or Mei Mei’s dumpling-making kits.

Joanne Chang is the owner of Flour Bakery+Café in Boston and Cambridge. The James Beard award-winning chef (Outstanding Baker) gives back to the community in numerous ways including monthly donations to non-profits such as No Kid Hungry, the Massachusetts Bail Fund, and the Greg Hill Foundation’s Restaurant Strong Fund. Joanne adapted her business model to create a central production kitchen for her eight bakeries. She offers DIY food and baking kits to help get through social distancing, and she has been creating weekly instructional videos for baking projects.

NEW ORLEANS INSPIRES COMMUNITY SPIRIT

By Beth D’Addono

Forget about winter, this was indeed the spring of our discontent. March 17 marked the closing of all live music venues, bars, and restaurants in New Orleans, a city powered by the voracious engine of tourism, which immediately sputtered to a gasping halt. Restaurants able to pivot, where allowed, offered curbside takeout and delivery including beer and wine—but inexplicably, not cocktails. Like each of you, we’ve been treading water in uncharted seas.

New Orleanians are nothing if not resilient. We’ve survived hurricanes, oil spills, floods, and recessions. Ok, this is our first pandemic, but it is downright awesome the way our Dames and the hospitality community are responding with kindness and generosity to help service workers, chefs, and restaurant owners make it through.

Leighann Smith donated her amazing beef hotdogs to one of the weekly Bloak Saturdays from the team at Blue Oak BBQ—they’ve been offering free weekly (daily on Jazz Fest days) community lunches, drive-thru style, at a warehouse near the restaurant.

Chaya Conrad managed to keep Bywater Bakery open and a limited number of staff employed by selling bread to Rouse’s supermarkets, a local, family-owned grocery chain. She opened a takeout window for a few hours a day to give neighborhood folks the chance to have fresh bread and much-needed treats. She donates bread to local food pantries and manages to give back countless ways as she struggles to keep her business going.

Feed the Frontline Nola was a brilliant initiative founded by the Mardi Gras Krewe of Red Beans.* It raised and spent up to $30,000 a day feeding more than 1,900 hospital workers, while supporting more than 35 local NOLA restaurants—53 percent women owned and 31 percent minority owned. It also provided jobs for 25 local musicians to deliver the food. Dames-related restaurants involved in this and other give-back efforts include Justine, Saba, Commander’s Palace, Toups’s Eatery, Copeland’s Family of Restaurants, Cochon Butcher. A sister initiative is Feed the Second Line.

Emily Shaya and her husband, Chef Alon Shaya, have been providing 500-600 meals a week to Tulane-affiliated hospitals for their residents, doctors, nurses, and staff. Her famous red beans and rice is served on Mondays to Feed the Frontline; 500-plus meals have been funded by other local businesses.

Caroline Rosen, executive director of Tales of the Cocktail®, and her team spearheaded a $200,000 foundation fundraising effort to assist bartenders and service workers affected by the pandemic around the world.

Beth D’Addono’s business—writing about restaurants, New Orleans, travel, and hosting tourists in her home—essentially disappeared overnight with only a question mark as to when it will all be back. She has been volunteering with the Blue Oak BBQ team to feed gig and hospitality workers.

Our Nola Dames are tough! We will move forward, and by the time we host Dames from other chapters for our fundraising weekend—whenever that is—we will have plenty to share. Please know that we are thinking of each of you.

* The Mardi Gras Krewe of Red Beans is known for its elaborate costumes beaded with red beans, rice, lentils, peas, bay leaves, and other items.—Editor.
NEW YORK: ON THE FRONT LINE
By Margaret Happel Perry

In the midst of the COVID-19 maelstrom, the New York Dames re-discovered the eternal truth that by helping others we help ourselves. Even before the current president, Sharon Franke, sent out her April letter to rally LDNY members, many had seized the initiative to reach out to the most deserving and neediest people of our communities.

Providing food was a priority. Marie Loi and her Loi Estiatorio team catered and delivered meals to frontline healthcare workers at hospitals all over the city as well as giving help to the homeless and elderly. Similarly, by April 15, Barbara Sibley and her La Palapa family provided over 2,100 meals to Mount Sinai Hospital. Cathy Fazzolari took advantage of the resources of her family’s business, D. Coluccio and Sons, and generously donated lunch to doctors, nurses, and hospital staff at Long Island Jewish Hospital where Cathy’s daughter is a nurse.

Surbi Sahni of Tigno Treats partnered with the New York City Department for the Aging to deliver thousands of meals to elderly New Yorkers. In addition, LDNY members contributed to a fund for ‘pay-it-forward’ meals for frontline medical workers at New York-Presbyterian Hospital as well as to people in need.

Looking to the future in times of hardship is essential. LDNY’s scholarship program is the yearly mission of the society. Supporting students to continue their education this year became more important than ever as we awarded 17 scholarships worth more than $80,000. Thanks to the leadership of May Matta-Aliah and Janet McCracken along with the electronic miracle of Zoom, the committee successfully gathered to collectively award a slate of most impressive winners. Of major importance was the establishment of a new scholarship called L’Etoile—The Star—given by an exceptionally generous person who wishes to remain anonymous. For the next ten years, $10,000 will be awarded to each L’Etoile winner. Here is our future!

PHILADELPHIA: HELPING HANDS FOR HEROES
By Jill Weber (Chapter President)

Philly Dames have kept busy! Charitable funding for meal donations is currently quite strong, and Michele Lefta’s 12th St. Catering, Ellen Yin’s High Street on Market, and Jill Weber’s Café Ynez have been making daily deliveries to the area’s hospitals, care facilities, and underserved communities. Samantha Kincaid’s Cadence is offering its kitchen for commissary work benefitting undocumented workers, and Sam is also helping other local producers make their own pivots. Many Dames transitioned from wholesale to retail—Olga Sorzano offers curbside pickup to consumers of her Baba’s Bucha and other local products through A Culture Factory, and Maryann Baldassarre shifted her Golden Valley Farms Coffee and Artisan’s Exchange—with its community of producers—to home delivery.

Heather Thomason’s Primal Supply is busy selling meat, and also Ann Karlen’s Third Wheel Cheese; look for Lisa Calvo’s Sweet Amalía’s Oysters to be retail-based soon! Another pivot? Jennifer Kirby now feeds humans at Piggyback Treats!

Our chapter has a series of social workshops—Virtual LesDamesPHL, and individual Dames are also active, virtually. Tune into Instagram Live with Alexis Siemons for #teatwisthese; “Saturday Morning with Pat” on Facebook Live with Patricia Nogar; and the Teaspoon of Spice Facebook page for weekly, live cooking demos with Deanna Segrave-Daly. Best wishes from Philly.

SACRAMENTO BOOSTS VIRTUAL COMMUNICATIONS
By Debbie Arrington

For our April virtual happy hour, Sacramento Chapter members donned hats from around the world (and enjoyed an equally wide range of beverages) as they Zoomed in and caught up with each other during what undoubtedly will be a spring no one will forget.

PARIS POSTCARD
By Jane Bertch (Past President)

During the difficult time of COVID-19, the Paris Chapter has been uniting to share information and resources. Despite the challenging times, a number of the members have used ingenuity to quickly transition their work and businesses—a few wonderful examples are listed below.

Caroline Conner in Lyon quickly responded by moving her Wine tasting experiences online, providing free virtual wine tastings. She initiated the process of creating a membership site where people can learn about wine. Her launch was May 14th.

Viktoria Todorovska from Nice, a certified sommelier and wine scholar, has transitioned to hosting virtual wine tastings for her clients, and she has begun to host wine tastings with Top Nosh, a platform that connects people with experts for virtual wine and culinary learning experiences.

Rosa Jackson in Nice has started hosting online cooking classes. In a wonderful partnership, she and Viktoria Todorovska have been taking students on a virtual Culinary Tour de France each Saturday, with a menu and dessert from eight different French regions plus wine recommendations. Join them on Rosa’s website.

Forest Collins, of the popular 52Martinis blog, is a Paris-based cocktail expert. She has pivoted her Podcast to focus on highlighting those in the food world that have been impacted by the coronavirus crisis. Listen to the Podcasts at Forest’s website.
Our members in the food, wine, and hospitality business—like other Dames across the nation—have been economically hit hard by the pandemic as “stay-at-home” rules have been put in place to flatten the curve on the COVID-19 virus spread.

Our chapter has been promoting #RestaurantRelief and #EatLocal to inform the public that while their favorite restaurant is closed for inside dining, they can still purchase orders through curbside pickup or have them delivered, (i.e., UberEats and DoorDash), or purchase Gift Cards to use at a later date. We’ve also been helping local food pantries and identifying crisis needs and shortfalls in our community.

For example, Rashin Mazaheri noticed some charitable organizations pulling back on their food deliveries to elderly, disabled, homeless people due to the city’s “stay-at-home” order as well as the fact that volunteers are older and in the “at risk” age group for COVID-19. Rashin began making and delivering food. She mentioned the need to our Dames, so members have been helping cover the gap as the city moves the displaced people to the shelter of empty hotels.

Dames have also been helping the community independently of the chapter. Dion Turner noticed neighbors at risk that weren’t able to get groceries, so she shopped for them and began a mobile farmers market for the neighborhood. She connected with her farmer friends and located additional farmers through other Dame members. The neighbors are able to get food they need, and the farmers can continue selling their produce.

Crystal Dady and her chef husband cooked meals for hospitality workers who lost employment. Marta Gonzalez learned about the medical community mask shortage, so she gathered several seamstresses and sewed masks for medical and other frontline workers. Elizabeth Johnson appeared on 60 Minutes on June 7 to discuss the challenge of reopening businesses and easing restrictions imposed to combat spread of coronavirus.

There are also many other San Antonio Dames working together behind the scenes to help our community in need. We are all in this together, and together, we will all get through the pandemic.
As coronavirus spread across the U.S., restaurants had to change course in a matter of days. Dine-in operations shut down in most states, employees were furloughed or permanently laid off and restaurateurs had to scramble to come up with anything that would keep their businesses afloat. “Pivot to survive” was the industry-wide mantra. Some decided to close down and wait it out in an effort to keep workers safe and allow them to collect unemployment benefits. But others forged ahead, meeting this unprecedented challenge with innovation and outside-the-box ideas.

**THE NEW FACE OF FULL-SERVICE**

Those that stayed open pivoted to curbside pickup and contactless delivery with meals targeted at housebound consumers. With smaller kitchen staffs, most restaurants pared down their menus and focused on best sellers or a couple of choices each night. Even Michelin-starred eateries such as Alinea in Chicago and Manresa in San Francisco transitioned into meals to go.

But a new category emerged in restaurants of every price range: family meals geared to diners quarantining at home. From burger chains like Shake Shack to fine-dining spots like Boka, these dinner packages took off for takeout. Lettuce Entertain You restaurant group in Chicago tapped several of its concepts to launch Lettuce Take Care of You, a meal subscription service that offered three meals each for a family of four with options from such renowned restaurants as Aba and RPM Steak.

To add an interactive element to dinner, a number of places introduced family meal kits composed of raw and/or partially prepared ingredients. Families who sheltered together could order kits to make pizza, tacos, Asian rice bowls, brunch, sushi, pasta and more, rolling mealtime and an activity into one package.

Cocktail kits and wine-to-go also gained popularity, as 42 states relaxed their laws around off-premises alcohol delivery. Restaurants started pairing the kits with the menu—margaritas with a taco bar, Aperol spritzes with a picnic box or mimosas with brunch—which not only boosted revenue but kept customers engaged. Managers helped expedite orders. “I wanted the community to have continuing access to the restaurant so there would be a restaurant on the other end of the pandemic,” she says. Sarah now helps farmers who are food suppliers to restaurants but have pivoted to sell directly to families.

**THE RESTAURMART—A WORKABLE HYBRID?**

When grocery stores began running out of supplies and restaurants had surpluses from decreased traffic and well stocked foodservice distributors, a number of operators converted their spaces into grocery stores. Toilet paper was the hottest commodity at first, but soon they were peddling restaurant-quality steaks, fresh produce and dairy products, specialty condiments and even the restaurant’s signature sauces, side dishes, and desserts. Broadline food distributor Sysco helped operators set up these popup retail markets.

**HOW A VIRUS Changed the Restaurant Industry—Maybe Forever**

Crisp, breaded portobello mushrooms from River Valley Ranch Organic, MightyVine tomatoes, Klug Farm asparagus, Capriole goat cheese sauce. Spring onions and garlic chive butter penne pasta with Klug Farm asparagus. The pasta meal went to the p.m. shift at Chicago’s Swedish Covenant Hospital. Photos: Sarah Stegner.

Family meal grilling kit. Cocktail kit. Photos: Pat Cobe

mixology. Along with a number of other restaurant chefs, bartenders and bakers, they posted these on Instagram Live, a free platform that turned out to be a good marketing tool. Commander’s Palace in New Orleans held virtual wine and cheese tastings. Guests purchased the package, the goods were delivered through contactless delivery, and the chef led a themed tasting on Zoom.

Chicago Dame Sarah Stegner, chef-owner of Prairie Grass Café in Northbrook, Illinois, combined these ideas and more to keep guests engaged and revenue coming in. During the quarantine, she offered meals for curbside pickup, focusing on one signature each day to ease operations for her skeletal kitchen staff. She also created special to-go menus for Easter, Passover, and Mother’s Day. She sold pizza kits for kids and even set up a cooking hotline for home cooks to call for recipe advice. Managers helped expedite orders. “I wanted the community to have continuing access to the restaurant so there would be a restaurant on the other end of the pandemic,” she says. Sarah now helps farmers who are food suppliers to restaurants but have pivoted to sell directly to families.
as an additional revenue stream.

Girl and the Goat, Stephanie Izard’s award-winning Chicago restaurant, didn’t jump on the trend until May, but customers were lined up outside waiting for their “Girl and the Goat-ceries” orders several evenings in a row. Purchasers get a bag of groceries and then have access to a video of Stephanie preparing a recipe with the ingredients in the bag. Some places, such as Clyde Common in Portland, Oregon, and Fat Rice in Chicago are permanently turning into markets selling groceries, meal kits, and grab-and-go dinners.

“For independents that do survive, you’ve got to do some shifting in your business model,” Eric Rivera, chef-owner of Addo in Seattle told Eater. “Everybody’s going to need off-premises delivery, takeout, and catering. Most full-service independents were experience focused. They’ve got to diversify. They’ve got to have an outlet if something like this happens again.”

PREDICTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

As restaurants are slowly phasing back into full service, takeout and delivery will stay in place to make up for lost revenue from half-filled dining rooms. And many operators are sticking with family meals and kits, at least in the short term; they’ve turned into a popular and profitable side business. Through the end of 2020, these are some other changes taking place:

• Menus will shrink. Streamlining menu choices will help mitigate challenges with supply, fewer employees, higher food costs, and reduced cash flow.

• Menu prices will go up. Restauranters have to cover increased sanitation and labor costs and decreased revenue, and at least break even in the beginning.

• Special deals will escalate, too. To build traffic, higher-end restaurants will offer meal deals, such as $15 lunches, happy hour promotions, and a revival of the classic “plat du jour.”

• Alcohol to go. Restaurants are hopeful that state laws will remain relaxed enough so they can continue selling cocktail kits. Some states are even allowing the sale of to-go mixed cocktails in sealed containers—a trend that is especially helping bars.

• Zero or minimal bar service. Operators are removing bar stools to allow for social distancing, and crowds standing around a bar doesn’t cut it either. Most drinks will have to be ordered at the table or an outdoor patio.

• Fewer shareables. Those popular platters of shared appetizers can spread viruses as well as socialization.

• Buffets and build-your-own stations are out. Social distancing is impossible with this service style.

• Tasting menus may disappear—at least in the short run. Upscale chefs are considering doing tasting plates, with samples of everything typically on a tasting menu but arranged on one vessel. This move also reduces labor and speeds table turns.

• Paper menus replaced by digital menus. Customers will order by text or QR code at the table and contactless payment will be available from their seats.

COVID-19 has wreaked change almost weekly, and consumer sentiment changes from week to week, too. There’s been a lot of pent-up demand to visit restaurants, but most consumers are wary about regularly dining out until a vaccine is discovered. A study by market research firm Magid revealed that only 31 percent of consumers were planning to visit a restaurant in the near term, but that figure goes up to 57 percent among those who said they expect to dine in by the fall.

FEEDING THE NEED

When the health crisis forced shutdowns in March, restaurants immediately committed to taking care of employees’ food needs first. Many have now provided hundreds of thousands of hot dinners, grab-and-go meals, groceries and more to furloughed employees, and continue to do so until they can be hired back.

But the industry as a whole has also shown tremendous generosity in feeding others in need. Many operators received money from various nonprofits, foundations, fundraising campaigns, and guest donations to hire back staff and prepare daily meals for frontline workers, health care employees, school children, and the swelling ranks of the unemployed. Some established food banks in their dining rooms, while others set up commissary kitchens in their restaurants. And in many cases, they intend to continue these efforts.

Barbara Sibley of the New York Chapter, chef-owner of La Palapa, worked with other area restaurateurs to prepare and serve 30,000 meals a day to frontline workers in 16 New York City hospitals. The effort was funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies and Word Central Kitchen—the nonprofit founded by Chef José Andrés. Supporting these and other organizations that are assisting restaurant employees and owners, frontline workers, and the hungry is the most effective way Dames can help sustain the industry. The Independent Restaurant Coalition was initiated by restaurateurs Tom Colicchio, Kevin Boehm, Naomi Pomeroy, Kwame Onwuachi and other industry leaders, and it now counts hundreds of food professionals in its ranks. The group is working tirelessly to lobby the Congress to create an Independent Restaurant Stabilization Fund to help restaurants survive the next year. Dames can go to www.saveourrestaurants.com to support their cause.

The restaurant industry is resilient and it will bounce back. But the next year or more is going to see some tough challenges. Most insiders predict that a new model will have to emerge to keep it going when we come out on the other side.

Local nonprofits and organizations undoubtedly have been established to help your neighborhood restaurants, the hungry in your area, and medical workers. But here are a few that involve chefs, restaurateurs, and other industry folks in a broader COVID-19 response:

The Lee Initiative
www.leeinitiative.org

World Central Kitchen
www.wck.org/

Rethink Food
www.rethinkfood.nyc

Restaurant Employees Relief Fund
www.rerf.us/

Real Food for Kids
www.realfoodforkids.org

U.S. Bartenders Guild
www.usbg.org/home

Everytable
www.everytable.com/covid19/

Food 1st
www.food1stfoundation.org

The James Beard Foundation
www.jamesbeard.org/openforgood
2020 GRANDE DAME NOMINEES

PROFILES IN LEADERSHIP

Seven highly accomplished Dames have made a positive impact on their chapters and the world at large through their extraordinary contributions in the fields of food, fine wine, nutrition, the arts of the table, and related disciplines. Only one will become LDEI’s 15th Grande Dame, but we applaud them all for their passion, innovation, and leadership skills as they continue to creatively inspire and elevate women through education, mentoring, and championing their causes, despite the global pandemic.—Susan F. Slack.

ALICE GAUTSCH FOREMAN
SEATTLE CHAPTER

Alice Gautsch Foreman is legendary for her food marketing work, her philanthropy, her support of student scholarship, and her commitment to LDEI. She began her career in New York City as an assistant food editor at the former McCall’s magazine, where she honed her skills in recipe development/testing and food styling. Alice also perfected her entertaining style as supervisor of the magazine’s executive-dining room. There the elite staff entertained luminary guests that included political giants, theater stars, and influencers of the time.

Food styling in the photo kitchens of General Foods (now Kraft) was her next career with Campbell Soup Company to follow. Under Claire Boasi, (Philadelphia), LDEI’s second president who was then head of the Campbell Kitchens, she gained extensive experience in media relations, special events, and marketing/PR skills rising through the ranks to manager of product publicity.

Many will remember Alice as the former President of Evans Food Group, encompassing Pacific Kitchens and its sister food-service division. During her 10-years with Evans, she created, directed, and worked on food-marketing projects that attained successful results for clients such as California kiwifruit and table grapes, Washington apples and potatoes, and Alaska seafood. Her next career opportunity was her own project-based consultancy, Gautsch & Associates, Inc., with Sunset and Redbook magazines, Best Foods, and Westin Hotels as clients.

Alice endowed a scholarship at Seattle Central College’s Seattle Culinary Academy. She co-founded LDEI’s Seattle Chapter in 1989 and championed the mission of raising women up through education by supporting her chapter’s scholarships. She has been a Conference sponsor and patron, underwritten costs for the LDEI scarf project as well as a Conference keynote speaker. She is a tireless campaigner for the Brock Circle and has underwritten projects that have advanced its goals and membership.

Alice’s honors include one of 75 Hidden Diamond Awards from her school at Purdue University; two from the Seattle Tennis Club plus a trophy named in her honor; certificates/awards of appreciation from 4-H, WSU, Edmonds Community College, Seattle Culinary Academy, FMI, and LDEI. She is greatly honored to be a candidate for Grande Dame.—Pascha Scott, Vice President, Seattle Chapter

Letter of Recommendation: Leslie L. Mackie (Seattle).

BETTY FUSSELL
NEW YORK CHAPTER

Dame Emerita Betty Harper Fussell is a pioneer in the American food movement whose accomplishments and contributions have had a profound impact on how we think and write about food. A graduate of Pomona College and Radcliffe College, Betty completed a Ph.D. at Rutgers University in 1974. She was a teacher of literature, non-fiction writing, food writing, cooking, and culinary history at such institutions as Connecticut College, Columbia University, the New School, NYU, the Institute of Culinary Education, California Culinary Academy, and the French Culinary Institute.

Betty is the author of 12 books, the earliest of which celebrated local, regional, and seasonal food and cooking long before these were watchwords of the American culinary vernacular. Her books include Masters of American Cookery: M.F.K. Fisher, James Beard, Craig Claiborne, Julia Child; I Hear America Cooking: The Cooks and Recipes of America’s Regional Cuisine; Food in Good Season; and Home Bistro. Her groundbreaking work, The Story of Corn (2004), set the standard for single-subject books about food.

Throughout her career, Betty has been passionate about sharing her expertise and mentoring younger people, in particular women and the disadvantaged. She has served as a tutor and role model to students, the formerly incarcerated, and to non-English speakers. With her guidance, legions of young people have developed culinary skills and found their writing voices.

Betty is the recipient of the James Beard Foundation’s Journalism Award and Cookbook Hall of Fame Award and is in the James Foundation’s “Who’s-Who in Food & Beverage.” She received IACP’s Jane Grigson Award, the Food Arts Silver Spoon Award, and the Culinary Historians of New York’s Amelia Award for Lifetime Achievement in Culinary History.

At 92, Betty continues to blaze trails. She recently completed the manuscript for her uncannily timely memoir, How to Cook a Coyote: A Manual of Survival. Just before the global pandemic hit, she delivered the keynote for a tribute to her late friend Julia Child; in May 2020, she headlined a virtual event for LDNY. We can think of no woman more worthy of the title Grande Dame than Betty Fussell.—Sharon Franke, President, New York Chapter

Letters of Recommendation: Marion Nestle and Meryl Rosofsky (New York).

CAROLYN WENTE
SAN FRANCISCO CHAPTER

The high-powered CEO of a multi-million dollar empire, a staunch supporter of Les Dames, an innovator, a multiple awardee in the North American wine community, and a generous, kind and hospitable person, the Washington, D.C. Chapter is proud to nominate Carolyn Wente for the 2020 Grande Dame Award. Carolyn is the Chief Executive Officer of America’s longest, continuously operated family-owned winery, Wente Family Estates. Founded in 1883 by her grandfather, the 137-year old winery now sustainably cultivates more than 3,000 acres in the Livermore Valley and Monterey County, California. The company was among the first wineries to receive the Certified California Sustainable Vineyard and Winery designation.

During her 40-year career at Wente, Carolyn helped create an empire that encompasses the vineyards (where more than three dozen varieties of grapes are grown), the golf course at Wente, tasting rooms, a catering service, and a gourmet restaurant and summer concert series—all nestled in the heart of the vineyard estate.

In 2019, she was named Winery CEO of the Year by North Bay Busi-
MARY ANN ESPOSITO

Having a reputation in the culinary industry as an innovator and trailblazer, Mary Ann Esposito is internationally known for her PBS series, *Ciao Italia*. This longest running television cooking series in America has a viewing audience in excess of 1.3 million viewers.

Over the course of her 30 years on PBS, Mary Ann has published 15 cookbooks on authentic Italian cooking from 20 regions of Italy. Her journey in cooking started at home where she learned at the elbows of her two grandmothers (one from Sicily and one from Naples), both cooking their regional family recipes. Through *Ciao Italia* and appearances on other national programs including *The Today Show*, Food Network, Discovery Channel, Fox, Hallmark Channel, *The Victory Garden*, and many others, she has been able to share traditional Italian cooking, history, and culture with audiences around the world.

Throughout her career, Mary Ann has worked beside world-renowned chefs such as Julia Child and Jacques Pepin. She is a culinary arts instructor at Boston University’s Metropolitan Campus and has been part of the Seminar in the Arts Program at Boston University for 30 years.

Mary Ann has demonstrated her generosity by giving back to the industry and has mentored many young chefs. Her Mary Ann Esposito Foundation was created to help culinary students achieve their goals. Its annual Rebecca Alssid Prize is presented to students who are part of the gastronomy and culinary arts program.

She has been an outstanding, giving member of our Boston Chapter for 30 years. Mary Ann has conducted seminars, taught cooking classes, and shared her knowledge of Italian history and culture. Mary Ann has also been very supportive of our chapter’s scholarship fund. Therefore, it is the Boston Chapter’s distinct pleasure to nominate Mary Ann Esposito for the 2020 Grande Dame Award.—Judith Fabre McDonough, President, Boston Chapter

Letter of Recommendation: Judith Akerman (Boston).

PAULA LAMBERT

**DALLAS CHAPTER**

Founder of the Mozzarella Company in 1982, Paula Lambert is nationally recognized as an award-winning, American artisanal cheesemaker, industry pioneer, teacher, TV presenter; leader of international culinary travel, philanthropist, and author of *The Cheese Lover’s Cookbook and Guide and Cheese Glorious Cheese*. She’s been lauded as an “iconic entrepreneur and Texas Treasure.”

Paula is included in the James Beard Foundation “Who’s Who of Food and Beverage in America”; the national Specialty Food Association Hall of Fame; Award of Excellence from Dallas Historical Society; Award of Excellence from the International Association of Culinary Professionals; Mary Baldwin College Career Achievement Award; and the Bits & Bites Award from Food & Hospitality Institute of El Centro College in Dallas. She was named as one of Dallas’ 500 Top Business Leaders by D Magazine in 2016 to 2019.

Paula served as President of the International Association of Culinary Professionals (IACP) in 2001 and chaired the IACP International Conference in Dallas in 2005. She also served as chairman of the Dallas-Fort Worth chapter of the American Institute of Wine and Food and on the board of Share Our Strength – Taste of the Nation. For many years, Paula has served on the boards of the American Cheese Society and the Specialty Food Association, which produces the national Fancy Food Shows. Locally, she has served on numerous boards, some of which include: The Charter 100 and the International Women’s Forum, both women’s business groups; The North Texas Food Bank, The Dallas Opera, the Advisory Board of the Federal Reserve Bank, and Uptown Dallas Public Improvement District.

Paula is also a devoted, active, 35-year member of LDEI. Her volunteerism and contributions are many. In addition to her exceptional achievements, Paula’s honorable, enthusiastic work ethic; artful style; and generosity of spirit make her a perfect candidate for this outstanding honor.—Kersten Rettig, President, Dallas Chapter

Letter of Recommendation: Susan Auler (Dallas) and Stephan Pyles.

SUE HUFFMAN ROBISON

**SACRAMENTO AND SAN FRANCISCO CHAPTERS**

Best known for her work as a founding partner of the Food Network in the 1990’s, Sue Huffman Robison began her career as a single mother and food page editor of the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. That was followed by ten years as food editor of *Ladies Home Journal*. Eventually she took the helm of Best Foods’ test kitchens, the public relations department, and the consumer affairs area.

In 1993, Sue became senior vice president of the fledgling Television Food Network doing fundraising and programming. When TVFN developed into the Food Network, she spearheaded the program division for four years, framing the way people in America eat and influencing similar networks throughout the world.

Sue, a former New York Dame, joined the San Francisco Chapter in 2011 after moving to Sacramento. After retiring, in 2015 she worked energetically to help form the Sacramento Chapter. Since that time, she has been an active Sacramento Dame serving on the Board and creating a strong, viable scholarship committee. This drive to help women excel began long before Sue headed west to be with her children. At the national level, she joined with Alison Awerbach (New York) to co-chair the LDEI Legacy Awards, designed to help women achieve their dreams.

Beyond it all, Sue is a mentor. She has had a long and historic career in so many areas related to the growing world of food. She is always talking about the work Les Dames does and how it can do more. And she believes in the power of Les Dames in a way that is infectious. She embraces each new member in Sacramento and offers personal advice and help. She attends almost every event we hold and travels to San Francisco for just a few more. She sees the abilities of each one of our members and helps them become better and stronger in their fields of work and as stewards of LDEI.—Amina Harris, President, Sacramento Chapter

Letter of Recommendation: Jerry Anne Di Vecchio (San Francisco) and Ann M. Evans (Sacramento and San Francisco).
The Quarterly Celebrates 20th Anniversary

From typed copy and halftone photos pasted on cardboard with rubber cement, LDEI’s premiere publication is now a full-color, 32 page magazine whose Conference issue burgeons to 40 pages. The slick publication that Dames know as the Quarterly is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2020. Along the way, seven different editors have contributed to the continual improvements and scope of the publication, and technological advances have furthered the quality of the photography and layout.

In 1999, LDEI’s member newsletter, the progenitor of the Quarterly, was a 4-page, 11x17-inch folded paper printed in black ink. Because of the significance of the century’s rollover, CiCi Williamson (Washington, D.C.), proposed a “Millennium” commemorative issue for 2000 with a color centerfold of chapter photos taken at the 1999 Atlanta Conference. The issue contains a history of the 19 chapters existing at that time. This 24-page Newsletter featured Grande Dame Edna Lewis on the front. A typesetter from The Washington Post laid out the stories and photos. In those days, you paid an additional ink charge for each different color printed on a page. The Newsletter went to full color and 32 pages under 2004-2005 LDEI President Dianne Hogerty (Kansas City). Now a magazine, it was renamed the Quarterly and published four times a year.

Since then, attendance at LDEI Annual Conference has increased to hundreds of Dames. In order to report on all the pre-conference tours, many events, and breakout sessions, Editor Susan Slack (Charleston) proposed expanding the Winter conference issue to 40 pages in 2011, which was approved by the LDEI Board. She introduced two features: the Global Culinary Initiative Postcard and We Be-LOnG, where Dames can share their voices through social media content. Since 2018, new columns on Leadership, Fundraising, and Trends have been added, and they are under the oversight of LDEI Second Vice President Danielle Weckslar (Charleston), the liaison between the Quarterly editors and the LDEI Board.

Department Editors Dottie Koteski (Philadelphia) and Nichole Bendele (San Antonio) compile the Member Milestone and Chapter Program features, respectively. Talented graphic designer Joni Keith now lays out the Quarterly—no more manual typewriters or rubber cement! From start to finish, the issues are generated on computers and sent to the offset printer electronically. From there, it goes to a mailing house and into your mailboxes. Seventy-six copies of the LDEI Quarterly from 2000 to 2020 are posted at www.ldei.org. —Susan Slack and CiCi Williamson.
Katherine Newell Smith  
(Washington, D.C.)  
2001-2003  
Quarterly editor was my first LDEI Board job. I loved working closely with such smart, creative women as well as the extraordinary members I featured and “encouraged” to contribute to our pages. While it was labor intensive, it was a labor of love. Showcasing members’ talents and accomplishments and including more diverse voices was incredibly satisfying. And, how fulfilling to have played a small role in the Quarterly’s evolution from a 24-page, blue-on-white printed newsletter to the glossy, four-color magazine it has become! A bonus as editor: I interviewed so many Dames I would not likely have met otherwise and formed some deep and lasting friendships.

Connie Hay (Washington, D.C.)  
2003-2004  
My term as Quarterly editor was a privilege and challenge. I set a goal to highlight members of the preeminent women’s organization in the culinary field. In 2003, the newsletter was primarily printed in black & white with no color photos. I chose a theme and requested feedback from women working in that specialty. Deadlines were as critical as ever. Although it was time-consuming volunteer work, the results were gratifying. Reading the Quarterly opens windows into the varied careers and accomplishments of our professional network. Dames can strike up a friendship with members near and far. The breadth of knowledge represented continues to fill inspiring newsletter issues and reflects the honor of being a Dame.

Jerry DiVecchio (San Francisco)  
2004-2006  
Since I was an editor at Sunset magazine for over four decades, putting together the Quarterly fit a pattern familiar to me. What a wonderfully enriching experience it was to work with all the chapters: planning issue content, gathering writers, working with Dames who did the regular features. What better way to get to know the values of LDEI? Two things stand out during my stint: the Quarterly went from black and white to color. My favorite project was assembling a bibliography of books by Dames. It took two issues hold it all. What an impressive, productive group of women.

June Hayes (San Antonio)  
2006-2007  
When LDEI President Diane Hogerty approached me in 2004 to discuss taking the newsletter to a bona fide magazine format as the editor and Second VP of LDEI, I was honored. Incoming 2005/2006 President Pat Mozersky was enthusiastic about taking this important step forward, and Greg Jewell was a real “jewel” in locating graphics talent and printing information. All board members were instrumental in the birth of the professional quality Quarterly that continues to be a great resource for keeping members informed. We all agreed that it would be money well spent. And in this digital age, I think most will agree that our Quarterly issues still serve as the “ties that bind.” The Quarterly is one of the major benefits of membership for me.

Sarah R. Graham (Charleston)  
2008  
Key topics were featured throughout 2008, including a behind-the-scenes glimpse at the production of LDEI’s acclaimed cookbook, Cooking with Les Dames d’Escoffier: At Home with the Women Who Shape the Way We Eat and Drink. Coast-to-coast chapter fundraising reports are featured in the summer Quarterly issue along with an inspiring story about Dames traveling to Vietnam who bridge a cultural divide. In the fall issue, President Katherine Newell Smith (Washington, D.C.) and First Vice President Suzanne Brown (Atlanta) present the first steps toward creating a strategic plan to chart the future course of LDEI. Dames were making a huge impact!

Susan Fuller Slack (Charleston)  
2009-2020  
The Quarterly has grown and evolved under diligent editorial stewardship ever since it was founded 20 years ago. CiCi Williamson and I work in tandem within a collaborative environment of Dame writers to showcase the philanthropic activities of 43 chapters, to celebrate LDEI’s valued partnerships, and to highlight the accomplishments of Dame professionals who are innovators, trend setters, and opinion makers. Created on a solid foundation of design, each Quarterly issue is a source of dynamic leadership education, insight, inspiration, and support for the mission of LDEI.

CiCi Williamson (Washington, D.C.)  
2000-2001 AND 2012-2020  
When I look back through all the issues of the Quarterly, I see an illustrated history of our organization, its chapters, and important women in culinary fields. The magazine is especially valuable as a reference and a concise archive of LDEI. I’m proud to have been the Quarterly’s founding editor, but dedicated, inventive Susan Slack has served as editor the longest. The two of us currently work in concert to make this a publication of which LDEI can be proud.
At Wente Family Estates we have always cared deeply about creating meaningful connections. A few years ago, we thought about the impact that we want our wines and wine-country experiences to have on our guests, and we updated our vision, “To inspire people to make time for what matters.” We know that when we make time for friends and family, whether it’s through a virtual happy hour, hiking, or cooking dinner together over a glass of wine, we simply feel happier. We believe that with every moment we make time for what matters most to us, we are spreading more joy.

Considering recent events and with everyone at home, we quickly realized there was a need for a different style of communication. We made a point to call our distributors, as well as our club members, to check in with no mention of sales or business. We also pivoted our email communication from typical sales, scores, and new release information to provide valuable inspiration on how our customers can #MakeTime at home. With the content coming out of our emails, we created a blog on the Wente Vineyards website that is now the home for our #MakeTime inspiration. We are proud to be some of the first to have launched a virtual Wine Wednesday event with Aly and Niki Wente, 5th generation winegrowers. The sisters and winegrowers go live on Instagram and Facebook each Wednesday night to share #MakeTime tips and/or interview other members of the family. Please join us!

A large shift in our business is working to support our friends “on premises” who are feeling the impact of COVID-19 the most. We quickly focused on a few key cities and regions where we have strong representation and put together a digital campaign to drive awareness of local restaurants that offer to-go or pickup services. We saw great success with our first test markets, and we are now expanding the program across the U.S. to key markets.

Our team is excited to be the first to launch a virtual tasting experience through Amazon Alexa and Google Home. Launched on May 1st, anyone with a device in the United States can experience an audible history and tasting of our Morning Fog Chardonnay, Riva Ranch Chardonnay, and Southern Hills Cabernet Sauvignon. The wines are nationally available or can be purchased through our website.

We are incredibly thankful for our Les Dames community and would like to offer our support through these times. Please let us know if there is anything we can do. We would love to stay connected and encourage you to join us for #WineWednesdays, so we can share a glass of wine together.

https://wentevineyards.com/wente-vineyards-virtual-tasting
Niki (left) and Aly Wente, 5th Generation Winegrowers

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FAMILY OWNED
PROUD SUPPORTER OF LDEI

90 POINTS Wine Enthusiast

WENTE VINEYARDS
Southern Hills
Cabernet Sauvignon
Livermore Valley

CERTIFIED CALIFORNIA SUSTAINABLE VINEYARD & WINERY
Edible Time-Travel to Pre-Hispanic Mexico

By Olga Boikess
(Washington, D.C.)

Flavors of Mexico 2020 was a whirlwind of food and cultural experiences hosted by the Mexico Chapter in early March. Visiting Dames were transported back to Aztec and Mayan times during a pre-Hispanic cuisine class and luncheon. The setting—a sleek, modern, high-tech restaurant and culinary university—offered an intriguing perspective on the first lesson: a demonstration of nixtamalization. This treatment of corn, which enhances it nutritionally and makes it usable for cooking, dates back to 1200–1500 BCE. Using age-old tools and methods, the instructor mixed the dried corn kernels with lime, then it was heated and washed. The corn was then ready for grinding and making tortillas.

Hands-on cooking was next. Dames were assigned to well-appointed, cooking classrooms to prepare dishes based on Mexico’s native ingredients.

Milpas, a soup using the traditional crops of the field—corn, beans, squash blossoms, tomatoes, wild greens and chiles—involved centuries-old methods of layering flavors in a huge cooking pot. One group of Dames grilled fresh, local fish that were flavored with tomato, cactus paddles, pepper, and onions and wrapped in banana leaves. Another group prepared sweet, corn-based dough baked in corn husks. These dishes were served, along with a spectacular buffet of native fruits and plant products, in a beautiful terrace dining room overlooking the splendid Parque México—a lush Mexico City park known for its art deco landscape architecture.

The Plight of Chinese Restaurants

By Suzanne Brown (Atlanta Chapter)
Global Culinary Initiative Chair

There is no doubt that all restaurants, no matter where they are located, have experienced hardships during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Chinese restaurants not only have suffered from closures, but also discrimination. Perhaps more than other immigrant restaurants, family owned Chinese restaurants are subjected to discriminating remarks including racist slurs such as the “Chinese virus” and “Wuhan bat.”

Chinatowns across the United States—New York, San Francisco, Seattle, and other large cities with international populations—are all suffering due to consumer misperceptions toward Chinese restaurants. In an article for Restaurant Business Online, dated April 13, 2020, author Peter Romeo’s headline states, “Half the Nation’s Chinese Restaurants have Closed, Study Finds.” The numbers referred to come from Womply, a credit card processing company that took the data from more than 400,000 transactions.

What’s more, family owned Chinese restaurants (and other international restaurants) have historically provided jobs for new arrivals from their home countries. Family legacies, culinary lineages, and integration within their own communities have been integral to immigrant populations.

Even though the United States government offers bailout loans for restaurants, it’s hard for restaurateurs who don’t have fluency in English to navigate the loan application, much less understand the details.

There is light at the end of the tunnel. Award-winning New York cookbook author Grace Young, in collaboration with Poster House and videographer, Dan Ahn, went to Chinatown to interview Chinese restaurant owners and post their stories on the website, Coronavirus: Chinatown Stories. The first five interviews are posted here: www.posterhouse.org/special-project/corona-virus-chinatown-stories/

Welcome to Chinatown is a grassroots initiative organized to help Chinese restaurants and communities that closed temporarily due to COVID-19. Some of the restaurants have reopened, but with much less staff along with adjusted business hours. Welcome to Chinatown has been able to raise funds through a fiscal sponsorship from Players Philanthropy Fund. As of their latest financial report, Welcome to Chinatown has raised $91,000 for restaurants and businesses, with $14,000 going to senior communities. www.welcometochinatown.com/our-mission

Although this article focuses on Chinese restaurants in New York’s Chinatown, all Asian restaurants in the United States and abroad have been targets of misperception and unfair criticism.

For additional information on how COVID-19 is impacting food systems around the world, read the latest issue (#12) of the GCI newsletter, HELLO WORLD, titled “The New Normal: Navigating a Global Pandemic.” (It is available at www.ldei.org under Global Culinary Initiative.) —Editor.

Photo: Unsplash: Dex Ezekiel
The Mexico Chapter planned and delivered another amazing four-day tour. This is the fourth year they have given LDEI chapter members an opportunity to explore the history, culture and, of course, food traditions of a region of Mexico. We hit the road running for a jam-packed Hispanic experience of Mexico City. Here’s a review of memories from each day.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4: We arrived at Hotel Presidente Intercontinental in Polanco and kicked off the long weekend with a tequila happy hour before heading to dinner at Pujol. The eatery, owned by internationally renowned chef Enrique Olvera, has been making the ranks on the annual “The World's 50 Best Restaurants” since 2012. We enjoyed a seven-course dinner, including the chef’s famous Mole Madre and Mole Nuevo. Rather than following a single recipe each morning, he starts with a mole base left over from the day before, to which he adds the seasonal products available, never in exactly the same combination. This means that, in the end, this mole has been built upon for six years. It was an interesting and rare experience to taste the flavor difference between old and new.

THURSDAY, MARCH 5: We headed to El Cardenal for a true Mexican breakfast prepared by owner, Dr. Marcela Briz Garizurieta and her youngest daughter Dona Olivia. We enjoyed hot chocolate whipped by hand tableside and freshly baked pastries in the modern dining room. After breakfast, we traveled to La Colonia San Rafael neighborhood for culinary workshops by Chef Poncho Hernandez at Sal de Nayar Culinary Lab. We prepared dishes such as Pambazos, Agua Chile, and Sweet Conchas and learned why Mexican wines are winning international awards. We enjoyed Tacos al Pastor prepared in the traditional style of Lebanese shawarma—thinly sliced meat roasted on a rotating spit. We wrapped up the day with dinner at the famous Blue House, the home of Frida Kahlo, Latin America’s most celebrated woman artist. After a tour of the museum, which contained some of the painter’s most famous works, we had a six-course dinner in the festive garden surrounding the home.

FRIDAY, MARCH 6: Breakfast at El Hidalguense included live music and a nine-course menu with Tacos de Barbacoa—roast lamb wrapped in blue maize tortillas. Barbacoa is one of Central Mexico’s most famous dishes. Owners Moises Rodriguez Vargas and his wife Norma Pérez Cárdenas were featured on the Netflix series Taco Chronicles (episode 5) showing the many days of preparation to make the dish. It was a delicious treat.

At the Superior School of Gastronomy we attended a two-hour class in Pre-Hispanic Mexican cuisine then enjoyed lunch on the terrace. That evening, we attended The Night of the Maria Rag Dolls at the historic Hacienda de Los Morales. We sipped Jose Cuervo’s best and viewed an all-women’s art exhibit before dinner. Dames wore the traditional, multicolored ribbon crowns of the Maria rag dolls.

SATURDAY, MARCH 7: After a leisurely morning we walked to the Sabores Polanco—Flavors of Polanco Festival, where the best known chefs from 75 restaurants prepared samples for tasting. Our farewell dinner was held at Museo Rufino Tamayo, an award-winning, contemporary art museum.

THE FLAVORS OF MEXICO CITY

Tacos and Tequila— A happy pairing

BY TERE S A FARNEY (COLORADO)

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Les Dames d’Escoffier International

who have developed menus and marketing materials, scaled their businesses, transitioned from a small kitchen to a commercial one, managed to develop “happy staffs,” developed recipes, and much more to help other Alabama women. Cantley & Company’s Cindy Cantley spoke to Dames on kitchen trends including cabinets, hardware, appliances, and finishes for 2020.

Telia Johnson followed up with a demonstration of three products/recipes she sells through her company. Birmingham Les Dames 5 p.m. Happy Hour (via zoom) begin in mid-March and is currently being hosted every Monday afternoon. It has kept members in touch and allowed an exchange of ideas and tactics to support members during the COVID-19 crisis.

NASHVILLE Nancy Vienneau

In the wake of the March 3rd tornado’s destruction, our chapter came together to focus on community aid. Our chapter programming became organizing efforts, feeding people, clearing debris, providing shelter, baking cookies, sorting donations, and giving hugs. Working with Second Harvest Food Bank, our chapter made and assembled 1000 box lunches, prepared and served a hot buffet lunch for 1000+, and prepared hot meals for 150 people on four occasions for the Red Cross Disaster Relief Shelter. We helped sort ingredients and prep meals at The Nashville Food Project. We donated a new refrigerator to a North Nashville food pantry. Like everyone else, we are on pause due to COVID-19. We stand ready to help our members whose businesses have been adversely impacted by the pandemic. Photo: Karen Wall.

ONTARIO Liz Palmer

We have been working behind-the-scenes to get our chapter up and running. Over the past four months, we have had two online board meetings, finalized our New Member Package, created Social Media Guidelines, and we are currently in the process of organizing our online Spring Social. As we search for glimmers of hope during this difficult time, we decided to launch our newly designed newsletter, which was also sent to all the chapter presidents. While we are locked-down, please give back, stay motivated, and connect with one another, no matter the distance apart.

PHILADELPHIA Deanna Segrave-Daly

Philadelphia Dames enjoyed their annual Winter Potluck hosted by 1st Vice President Amanda Feifer in a beautiful office loft in Old City. Along with delectable homemade food and beverages from traditional pierogis to cold-brewed infused teas, we put together an impromptu raffle of donated...
culinary products that raised close to $1,000 for our scholarship fund.

Unfortunately, due to the quarantine, several events needed to be cancelled (but will hopefully be rescheduled) including a private screening of the *James Beard: America’s First Foodie* documentary coupled with an interactive dinner reception with the director and producer. We also look forward hosting our 5th Annual Women In Food networking reception (typically in April) when it is safe to do so.

In the meantime, President Jill Weber hosted our first monthly Zoom happy hour that was well received. Fellow members shared news of the activities they were involved with while staying at home along with toasting everyone virtually.

**SAN ANTONIO**  
*Karen Haram*

San Antonio Chapter founding members Cynthia Guido, Karen Haram, and Pat Mozersky were honored with Emerita status at the chapter’s January meeting at Lainey Berkus’ home. The chapter voted to confer this status to the women on the 25th anniversary of the chapter’s founding. Grand Dame Rosemary Kowalski was also a founding member and previously was awarded Emerita status.

The San Antonio Chapter’s annual Word of Mouth book club featured a discussion of Ruth Reichl’s cookbook-memoir, *My Kitchen Year: 136 Recipes That Saved My Life*. The discussion was led by Karen Haram. The event took place at Diana Barrios-Trevino’s home, and dinner featured several dishes from Ruth’s cookbook including Korean bulgogi, chili, deviled eggs, corn pudding, fried chicken, Asian noodle and shrimp salad, steak sandwiches, and cheesecake. A highlight: During the event, Diana tweeted about our gathering and Ruth tweeted that she wished she were there.

Photos: Karen Harem

**SEATTLE**  
*Norma Rosenthal*

The Seattle Chapter was delighted in March to give a warm welcome to our dynamic new members: Dames Meredith Abbott, Christina Lehman, Kara Martin, Marilyn Mercer, Julie O’Brien, Emme Ribiero (Collins), and Sabrina Tinsley.

Chapter members shared the joy of providing a check to Washington State University to establish an endowed scholarship for a woman student in Organic and Sustainable Agriculture. This is the chapter’s seventh endowed scholarship within the State of Washington.

**SOUTH FLORIDA**  
*Irene Moore*

In January, South Florida Dames held a lovely four-course French Dinner at M&V Café and Wine Bar in North Miami, paired with Secret Vines French wines. Irene Moore was event chair, with Susan Weinstein, Robin Webb, Patty Morrell-Ruiz, and Marisol Garcia-Leira on the event committee.

M&V Café is owned by Chef Fabrice di Rienzo, who trained in classic French cooking in the style of Chef Auguste Escoffier. He was owner and chef of La Table d’Auzeville, an Escoffier-style restaurant in Azeville, France, for eight years. He and wife, Stephanie, recently moved to Miami to try their hand in the restaurant business here.

In March, Dames celebrated spring with “A South Florida Dames Day Out In Palm Beach” fundraiser lunch at Café Boulud. Seated at a long, communal table under swaying palm trees, Dames remembered the afternoon longingly: for most, it was their last event out before the coronavirus forced Floridians to start staying home.

Lunch was followed by, “The Culture of Food,” a talk at the Society of the Four Arts by Sam Sifton, food editor of the *New York Times*. Karen Escalera and Irene Moore co-chaired the event; the event committee included Annie Hall, Cassandra Appleman, and Maude Eaton. Photos: Irene Moore
San Antonio Time Dollar Community Connections

By Nichole Bendele
(San Antonio)

San Antonio Chapter Green Tables Co-Chairs Linda Triesch and Dion Turner, with other fellow Dames, have assisted at San Antonio Time Dollar Community Connections to teach nutritious cooking classes to adults and children so they can prepare healthy meals from the gardens they help plant.

The chapter works closely with San Antonio Time Dollar, the Junior Master Gardeners’ Program, and soon, with Casa Mia, a safe haven for mothers recovering from opioid addiction.

San Antonio Time Dollar uses the time banking system. Time dollars are a form of currency that people can earn by helping each other and spend by getting help from others. The members exchange their time and talents to create a hand up—not a handout—organization of neighbors helping neighbors to build and improve their community.

The Green Tables Committee has continued to be active during this time of stay-at-home. Both Drew Faulkner, Chair, and Ellen Kanner, Vice Chair, are participating on the Philanthropic Task Force as part of the Strategic Planning Initiative of the LDEI Board. We are taking this time to examine the role of Green Tables today and how we envision it going forward in our new, developing reality.—Drew Faulkner
The Legacy Awards Committee Selects the 2020 Winners

By Julie Chernoff (Chicago)

Six professional women have been chosen as the 2020 Legacy Awards recipients of Lees Dames d’Escoffier International. Each has earned a one-week mentoring experience from six of the organization’s distinguished members.

Crystal Zhao, a lead business analyst and process improvement manager for The Fish Guys, a seafood and meat supplier in Minnesota, was awarded the Austin Food Chain Award from Quality Seafood Market in Austin, Texas.

Katherine Rapin, a journalist and managing editor of The Philadelphia Citizen in Philadelphia, was awarded the Chicago Journalism Award from Plate magazine and Winsight Media in Chicago.

Destiny Burns, the founder and owner of CLE Urban Winery in Cleveland, was awarded the Wente Family Estates Wine & Hospitality Award from Wente Family Estates in Livermore, Calif.

Christa Cotton, the founder and CEO of New Orleans Beverage Group in New Orleans, was awarded the Mexico Fine Spirits Award from José Cuervo in Mexico.

Amethyst Ganaway, a line cook in Albuquerque, N.M., was awarded the New Orleans Culinary Award from Compère Lapin & The Southern Food and Beverage Museum in New Orleans.

Tara Chapman, the founder and owner of Two Hives Honey in Austin, Texas, was awarded the Sacramento Agriculture Award from culinary businesses in the famed Farm to Fork region of the Sacramento Valley.

“Considering what a harrowing year this has been for our industry, the Legacy Committee was especially thrilled that we had so much interest from highly qualified, up-and-coming women involved in fine wine, spirits, and food,” says 2020 Legacy Awards Chair Julie Chernoff (Chicago). “There were so many extraordinary applicants to choose from, and as a committee, we agree that this is perhaps the strongest group of Legacy hopefuls that we’ve ever had. Of course, the changing nature of the pandemic and its effect on the hospitality industry has necessitated flexibility on the part of all involved, from the committee and hosts to the award winners themselves. A few of the experiences have been pushed back to later this year, and some will happen in 2021. All of the 2020 Legacy Award winners will be invited to present at the 2021 LDEI Annual Conference in San Antonio, Texas, and we look forward to celebrating these wonderful women with all of you.”

The members of the 2020 Legacy Awards Committee are: Julie Chernoff, Chair; *Stephanie Carter, Vice-Chair; Abigail Kirsch; Alison Awerbuch; *Amy Hoopes; Barbara Hanley; Becky Paris Turner; Belinda Smith-Sullivan; *Carol Huntsberger; Colleen Minton; Jovan Sage; Kathy Gold; Marsha Palanci; Natasha Cary; Naylene Dillingham; Nona Nielsen-Parker; Patricia Gelles; *Pat Cobe; Shara Bohach; *Sue Robison; Suzi O’Rourke; Tanya Holland; Toria Emas; and Victoria Taylor.

(* denotes 2020 Legacy Host)

The Legacy Awards program is generously supported by The Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts.

NIMAN RANCH IS PROUD TO SUPPORT LES DAMES D’ESCOFFIER as we work together to support careers for women in food and agriculture

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• Fed all vegetarian feeds
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*S In accordance with industry standards, numerous U.S. federal regulations prohibit the use of hormones in pork.

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AUSTIN
Joi Chevalier was featured as one of Austin’s Black female powerhouses in the February issue of Austin Woman magazine. She also spearheaded an effort to take food that would go to waste and turn it into prepared meals to feed Austin’s most needy and put restaurant professionals back to work.

Denise Clarke, Certified Sommelier, Certified Wine Educator, and owner of DC Communications received the 2020 Wine Press Award from the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association.

Krystal Craig, co-owner and chocolatier/pastry chef with Intero Ristorante won a fellowship grant from the Junior League of Austin.

Alicynn Fink created a comprehensive spreadsheet on grants and other financial support available to help local restaurants and businesses affected by COVID-19.

Anna Tauzin, with the Texas Restaurant Association, spearheaded an effort to petition state lawmakers to provide assistance to Texas restaurants affected by COVID-19.

BIRMINGHAM
Christina Almanza has been named to the Birmingham Business Journal’s 2020 Top 40 Under 40. She is Business Development Coordinator for the Birmingham Division of Buffalo Rock and involved in a number of community organizations where she is able to effectively utilize her trilingual skills.

Raquel Ervin, executive chef and owner of Panoptic Catering, has been named President of the American Culinary Federation Birmingham Chapter. Raquel started her own business in 2014 and recently appeared in two primetime shows on the Food Network as well as the Cooking Channel.


CHARLESTON
Nathalie Dupree, the “doyenne of modern Southern cooking,” appeared in the March issue of The Local Palate magazine in the feature article, “At Home with Nathalie Dupree.” The award-winning chef reflects on forging her own path, the power of female connections, and why she cooks grits in the microwave.

Ashley Strickland Freeman celebrates the South’s favorite mayonnaise in her new book, The Duke’s Mayonnaise Cookbook: 75 Recipes Celebrating the Perfect Condiment. Created in 1917 in a home kitchen in Greenville, South Carolina, the mayonnaise has a cult following throughout the southeast, and it can now be purchased in over 40 states.

Belinda Smith-Sullivan’s new cookbook, Let’s Brunch, 100 Recipes For The Best Meal Of The Week, will be published in September. Her curated flavors and gracious hospitality are the down-home connection to dishes that are based upon more sophisticated ingredients and spice combinations.

GREATER DES MOINES
Cyd Koehn, chef and caterer, was recognized for her accomplishments and noted as one of the Best Local Caterers in the Des Moines area when CITYVIEW magazine released its 2020 Best of Des Moines winners and runners-up. The votes were cast by Central Iowa residents.

BOSTON
**NASHVILLE**

Maneet Chauhan’s eight-page story, “Snack City,” appeared in the May issue of Food & Wine magazine. The story is about Maneet’s favorite snacks in the markets of Mumbai, India. The recipes are her adaptations to make in the U.S. Maneet@chauhannashville.com

**NEW YORK**

Melanie Young, co-host of a weekly national radio show, The Connected Table Live, was named a 2020 award finalist for Best Radio Show by the International Association of Culinary Professionals. Feedspot named the popular radio show among the top 15 food and drink podcasts to listen to in 2020.

www.theconnectedtable.com

**SACRAMENTO**

Ann M. Evans was selected by Sacramento Magazine as one of The Sacramento 300 – The Most Powerful Business Leaders in Metro Sacramento. Ann is a former mayor of Davis and co-founded local food system mainstays such as the Davis Farmers Market.

www.sacmag.com/sacramento-300/

Mary Kimball, executive director of the Center for Land-Based Learning, was recognized by Sacramento Magazine as one of The Sacramento 300 – The Most Powerful Business Leaders in Metro Sacramento. www.sacmag.com/sacramento-300/

Bobbin Mulvaney who co-owns Mulvaney’s B&L and is co-founder of Women in Food & Agriculture, was selected by Sacramento Magazine as one of The Sacramento 300 – The Most Powerful Business Leaders in Metro Sacramento.

www.sacmag.com/sacramento-300/

Amber Stott was selected by Sacramento Magazine as one of The Sacramento 300 – The Most Powerful Business Leaders in Metro Sacramento. Amber is the CEO of the Food Literacy Center.

www.sacmag.com/sacramento-300/

**SAND ANTONIO**

Abby Kurth, MPH, MS, Certified Clinical Nutritionist, announced the publishing of her book titled, Sick and Tired, To Healthy and Inspired: 9 Steps to Prevent Lifestyles Related Diseases. It is a lifestyle-changing workbook, which takes the reader step-by-step toward changing his or her mind and health.

Dion Turner, RD, registered dietitian, retired from Resolute Health Hospital in March and is looking forward to her new priority in life, which is spending time with a new grandchild, her first.

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Aviva Goldfarb is now Director of Marketing for HipCityVeg, a woman-owned and led group of fast casual, plant-based restaurants in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. During the COVID-19 business closures, the group has supplied 1500 free meals to needy customers.

avivalgoldfarb@gmail.com

Pati Jinich won the 2020 James Beard Award for best Television Program, in Studio or Fixed Location, for Pati’s Mexican Table – A Local’s Tour of Culiacán. Pati’s show airs on PBS-TV nationwide and is now in its eighth year. She was featured in the spring 2020 LDEI Quarterly.

Toni Tipton-Martin won the 2020 James Beard Award in the best American cookbook category for Jubilee: Two Centuries of African American Recipes (Clarkson-Potter). In 2016, Toni won a James Beard Award in the Reference and Scholarship category for The Jemima Code: Two Centuries of African American Cookbooks (University of Texas Press).
IN MEMORIAM

Gig Owen
(1941-2020)

San Francisco LDEI has just lost a founding member. Gig Kane Owen suffered acute cardiac arrest on April 18, 2020, at age 79.

Her husband, Mel Owen, shares this sad news from their home in Belvedere. Gig, a founding member of our chapter in 1989, had been dealing with heart and other health conditions the last few years.

Gig’s wonderful smile, enthusiasm, kindness, generosity, and positive approach to life was remarkable. Her contribution to LDEI through the years included serving as secretary and historian, hosting events in her home and aboard Pat Pending, the Owen’s classic yacht, in the San Francisco Bay. There were few events she didn’t attend, and if not, it was usually because she and Mel were traveling.

Gig was the best for offering to drive other members to events. Her ultimate persuasion was she could find parking—but she paid a high price for her blue disabled card in the car. In the early years of our chapter, she was in an accident that caused the loss of part of one leg. With truly incredible, inspirational optimism, she healed and moved on.

She brought the same spirit to her career in management and hospitality, as part of the opening team for both the Stanford Court and Campton Place Hotels.

LDEI-SF was fortunate to have Gig Kane Owen’s support and friendship these many years. Thank you, Gig, for everything.

Send condolences to: Mel Owen, 25 Beach Road Apt. H, Belvedere, California, 94920.—Jerry Di Vecchio

Jane Mengenhauser
(1932-2020)

A member of the Washington, D.C. Chapter for 38 years and a proof-reader for the LDEI Quarterly for more than a decade, Jane O’Shea Mengenhauser passed away in her sleep on April 1 at Maple Grove nursing home in Ashburn, Virginia. She was 88 years old. Jane was the longtime food editor of the six Journal Newspapers in suburban Washington and held many positions in the D.C. Chapter including several years as scholarship chair.

A Boston native, Jane attended Boston University where she majored in home economics and journalism. She worked at Cambridge Gas and Electric Co. helping customers understand the latest advanced gas appliances. During the Korean War, Jane worked for the American Red Cross in South Korea where she met aviator Jim Mengenhauser. They married in El Paso, Texas, in 1960 where he was stationed after Korea.

Jim, her husband of 60 years, donated more than 1,000 of Jane’s cookbooks to the LDEI collection at John & Bonnie Boyd Hospitality & Culinary Library in New Orleans. Jane was the author of two cookbooks: Bake Sale Bonanza: How to Raise Funds Selling Homemade Food, and The Celibate Gourmet: A Cookbook for Liberated Clergy Persons.

A member of the Culinary Historians of Washington (CHOW), she delighted in researching food history and recipes. We will miss Jane’s clever wit and bubbly personality.—CiCi Williamson

Rose Ann Finkel
(1946-2020) Seattle

It is with great sadness that the Seattle Chapter shares the passing of longtime Dame, Rose Ann Finkel. She was the co-founder of Seattle’s iconic Pike Brewing and a pioneer in the specialty and imported food, beer, and wine industries.

Rose Ann was introduced to the pleasures of the table early in her childhood. After marrying Charles Finkel, a wine merchant, the duo traveled the world, where they collaborated with vintners, brewers, distillers, and specialty food makers culminating in the establishment in 1969 of Bon Vin, a trailblazer in offering wines from small, family-owned wineries.

After Bon Vin was acquired by Ste. Michelle, Rose Ann went on to open Truffles, a specialty food store, as well as the Gourmet Grocery—one of Seattle’s early women-owned businesses.

In 1978, the Finkel’s love of beer became their vocation with the founding of Merchant du Vin, the first company to introduce craft beer from family-owned European and American breweries throughout the U.S. The Pike Brewery was launched in Seattle’s historic Pike Place Market in 1989.

An active Seattle Dame, Rose Ann contributed a section on beer to the LDEI cookbook, “Cooking with Les Dames d’Escoffier.” She is fondly remembered as warm, gracious, full of life and joy.

THE LDEI RELIEF FUND

The LDEI Board approved the establishment of the LDEI Relief Fund in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on women in the culinary industry. The Fund’s purpose is to raise monies and provide funding to establish 501(c)(3)s; non-governmental agencies (NGOs); and other recognized international nonprofits benefitting women who are impacted by such global disasters. Additional information on the fund will be forthcoming. A special thank you to Alice Gautsch Foreman for planting “seed” money into this new Fund, as well as to our sponsors and the many Dames who have contributed. Visit www.ldei.org if you are interested in making a donation.
From Crisis to Opportunity

We’re all navigating uncharted territory right now due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A health crisis of this magnitude impacts everything in our personal lives, our businesses, and our chapters. In these uncertain times, we have learned one thing for sure: We’re stronger together. As we move from this period of mandatory stay-in-place to re-opening our country, I’d like to offer some ideas that may be helpful for you to deal with what seems like Groundhog Day.

Keep your brain and your thoughts directed in ways that are meaningful. This pandemic clearly makes our lives harder and that’s emotionally draining. Managing your mind is essential, especially if you have employees who are overworked and exhausted, if you have clients who are demanding a ton of you, or if you’ve had to lay off employees.

Be a good listener. Be the first one to lead off with hope. Be patient. Bond together. If you feel a little bit panicky, that just makes you normal. Find ways to calm yourself through meditation or prayer or whatever works. And take advantage of this opportunity to get creative.

I find that whenever I’m the most limited or unsure of something is the time I become the most creative in finding solutions to problems. Reframing your limitations as opportunities will make you think in new and different ways. Push yourself. Write your thoughts and frustrations down on paper. Get it out of your head so you can see it and solve it. You’ve got this!

I’m watching people take risks in ways I have never seen before. Perhaps you are considering new ways to sell, package, and deliver your food or service. Maybe you want to try out different marketing strategies or platforms or social media connections. Well, go for it! Of course, it’s scary. Change can be terrifying. Yet, it’s also a superpower. I encourage you to embrace new possibilities rather than be paralyzed by the unknown. Stopping cold has a sure end point. Embrace innovating and solving instead of shutting down and fretting. Choose what will propel you forward.

I’ve been saying to a lot of my business friends lately that you may not be able to do what you used to do, but you can do something differently that you never expected. Your business may look entirely different in six months and that could be a great thing.

Finally, our businesses are about service. Whether you are a food photographer, a publicist, a chef/restaurant, a wine merchant, an author or practicing in any number of professions in our industry, service is key to what we do. So, be super focused on helping, serving, providing more, supporting, and even partnering.

In our Washington, D.C. Chapter bi-monthly newsletter, there is a new section called, “How Dames Step Up.” It highlights Dames who are answering the call to serve in our communities. Whatever you can do to continue working on your business, or yourself while serving others, every small bit will help you make it through this.

Chapters have been hosting virtual programs, cooking classes, wine tastings, and meetings at an impressive pace. I encourage every Dame to continue to be as active as you can in your chapter even if you’re not comfortable with this online technology. Reach out to others who can help you stay connected.

The pandemic will pass eventually. In the greater scheme of the world, this is temporary. There will be a moment where everything comes back together, and we’ll be telling stories about how we navigated it together. Until then, my prayers go out to all of you and your loved ones.
**The Brock Circle**

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is a major donor to two philanthropies with its parent company contributing to the Seattle Foundation. St. Michelle is partnering locally to produce hand sanitizer, and its culinary team has provided meals to two local hospitals plus Woodinville Fire and Rescue.

Lisa Dupar's catering company is preparing "gratitude meals" for first responders via bigthanks.org, which connects donors with foodservice businesses that can produce and deliver the meals. The keen marketing knowledge and skills of Deba Wegner and Pascha Scott are helping small businesses and organizations retool marketing plans, research strategies, and provide crisis management expertise to adapt to these uncertain and difficult times. Dame retailers are adapting. Their four retail stores were temporarily closed, but Fran Bigelow says Fran's Chocolates are opening for curbside pickup, and they are available online. Julie O'Brien's Firefly Kitchens retail store is closed, but their fermented food products are available online.

Angela Shen changed her business model from guiding tours in Pike Place Market to packaging food products from market establishments. A portion of the proceeds from each order goes to the Market Foundation. She launched the Seattle Solidarity Box featuring 11 Black-owned food businesses. The company donated 100 percent of profits from the first 200 boxes and $5.00 of every subsequent box that was sold to the Black Lives Matter Fund. Angela says, “We donated $38,000 to the Pike Place Market Foundation and the Black Lives Matter fund in 14 weeks and supported over 60 local businesses with over $700,000 in direct sales.”

**SOUTH FLORIDA: CREATIVE VIRTUAL NETWORKING**

*By Irene Moore, (Chapter President)*

On March 16, I emailed the South Florida Dames to say there would be no events until further notice. Our annual French spring dinner, April in Paris, and a May event, Moving Toward Zero Waste, were cancelled until further notice. I reminded everyone by email not to shake hands, hug, or kiss, but rather to “elbow bump” and to wash their hands after touching public surfaces and before eating.

As Florida began to shut down, we established a communications line; our Dames were encouraged to let us know if anyone needed assistance with gathering groceries or medicines. We posted Miami Herald articles offering resources on Les Dames South Florida Facebook. We posted about the Florida Atlantic University Business Hospital-
ity and Tourism Management Program making headlines by offering a free certificate program to industry work-
ers and professionals affected by the coronavirus. Our 2019-20 scholarship recipient, Maria Franks, is graduating from the program in a virtual ceremony with her diploma mailed to her.

**Diane Campion** gathered information on farmers markets in Palm Beach and Miami Dade Counties for our Facebook page. She is President of Slow Foods in Palm Beach County. **Karen Escalera** posted in her blog, MiamiCurated.com, about numerous things to do and information we needed since we were now staying at home.

Maude Eaton has been doing virtual cooking classes with the Keyes Company. Alessandra Esteves, an educator and owner at the Florida Wine Academy, teaches a wine-tasting webinar every Friday night and wine webinars other days of the week. A Wine Kit with 3-4 of the wines featured in the webinar tasting can be purchased for shipping.

Patty Morrell-Ruiz is doing Instagram Live Fridge and Pantry Foraging classes with AvMed Health Group. Patty is a whiz at taking what’s in the pantry and making it work so fewer trips to the grocery store are necessary. She is also teaching free culinary classes for kids on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons so their work-at-home parents have a couple of extra hours.

**Claire Tomlin’s The Market Company is awaiting approval from the City of Miami Beach for home delivery for produce, baked goods, honey, seafood, grass-fed beef, ceviche, guacamole, and other prepared foods.**

**Irene Moore** is writing articles pro bono for International Event & Exhibition Management (IEEM) about various Italian wine Consorzi to help promote the Italian wine industry, devastated by the coronavirus. She is also working on Instagram Live posts and interviews to personally showcase Italian wineries and vintners.
WASHINGTON, D.C. SUPPORTS COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS

By Carole Sugarman

Many Washington, D.C. Chapter Dames stepped up to serve our communities during the pandemic. Ruth Gresser, owner of Pizza Paradiso, collaborated on a 10,000 Pizzas project, donating pizzas to families, seniors, health care workers, and unemployed hospitality staff in need. Art Works Now provided mandala coloring sheets to accompany the pizzas. Jill Collins of Jill Collins Public Relations Group, worked with client Hook Hall, an event space that distributed care kits and family meals to hospitality workers who lost their jobs. Evelyn Bunoan, owner of Philippine Market & Deli, baked cookies for hospital nurses. Other Dames offered free online cooking classes, and restaurateur members altered their business models to offer meal kits, food clubs, carryout, curbside pickup, and delivery. Annie Boutin King, a member of the Comité Tricolore, helped deliver 50 meals to homeless residents at La Casa of Friendship Place. The associative network helps support the Washington, D.C. area Francophile community.

At the beginning of April, 15 chapter Dames volunteered to make personal phone calls to all our approximately 140 members. The idea was to see how everyone was doing, offer support, and get suggestions for useful online activities the chapter could organize during this period. The membership list was divided up, and each volunteer was asked to make anywhere from 6 to 10 calls. The resounding feedback was that members were extremely appreciative of the calls.

To further keep connected during the stay-at-home period, we also held “Dames Who Drink” with 10 calls. The resounding feedback was that for any questions or issues, email the editor at MemberMilestones@ldei.org.

PHOTOGRAPHY/IMAGES

• Electronic images must be properly focused and in color with a minimum resolution of 300 dpi (TIFF or JPEG).
• Cell phone photos are acceptable if they meet requirements.
• Do not send photos taken off the Internet or embedded with text in Word files or PDF files.
• Include photo credits, if required.
• A photo permissions form must be submitted.
• A maximum of three photos can be submitted per chapter.
• ALL PHOTOGRAPHS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY CAPTIONS OR THEY WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED.

LDEI regrets that we cannot include lengthy profiles of individual Dames due to space limitations. Submit Dames’ accomplishments to “Member Milestones” or to LDEI’s Closed Group on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/groups/218435184886471/.

Note: “Chapter Programs” and “Member Milestones” may be dispersed through LDEI social-media channels, as well as in print and online.

Ruth Gresser donates 10,000 pizzas during the coronavirus pandemic. Mandalas or “circles” in Sanskrit are sacred symbols for meditation, prayer, healing, and art therapy for adults and children. Pizza Paradiso delivers pizzas to area hospitals. Photos: Ruth Gresser.

Julia Child Virtual Birthday Brunch

Join us for a virtual celebration of culinary icon Julia Child on Sunday, August 16, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., EDT. A few highlights of the event include a live CookAlong featuring one of Julia’s favorite recipes and a panel discussion on ethnic diversity in food. Meet the winners of the “Dress Up Like Julia” contest. To register, visit www.ldei.org (Members’ section/Events).

UPCOMING in the fall issue

• Standing Strong Together, Part Two
• Meet the 2020 Grande Dame
• Recap: LDEI Summer Virtual Board Meeting
• Resources from Dames’ Websites
• Eat! Drink! And Be Dame Resilient Brunch!
LDEI UPCOMING CONFERENCES
For Conference details, visit www.ldei.org (Members’ section/Events)

2020 LDEI Gratitude Virtual Conference

2021 LDEI Annual Conference