



Les Dames d'Escoffier  
INTERNATIONAL

# Birmingham

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Founded in 2013

[ldeibirmingham.org](http://ldeibirmingham.org)

May 2017

## President's Note

Dear All,

Not a day goes by that I don't reflect on all the wonderful experiences we had on our LDEI Mexico adventure, March 8-12. From Guadalajara to Tequila, five Birmingham Dames (and 2 husbands) toured and absorbed all we could of the local foodways, production, and culture.

Our first day, we left our base in Guadalajara and traveled about an hour west to Los Guachimontones, a pre-Hispanic archaeological site near the town of Teuchitlán, Jalisco. Next we met Maru Toledo and attended cooking classes in home kitchens with 24 Women of the Corn. That evening we traveled to Talaquepaque where we were welcomed by the director of tourism and the lady mayor of the city. As we meandered down the street to the plaza, we felt we were visiting royalty.

The next day we saw the Centro Educativo Jaltepec, a culinary and hospitality school, in Magdalena. Jaltepec is located in Oaxaca in southwestern Mexico. We traveled on to the city of Chapala and had an al fresco lunch at Monte Coxala Restaurant. It had an absolutely

*continued on page 2, see Letter*

## LDEI Birmingham auction package receives highest bid



*Baptist Health Foundation held their first annual Wine, Women & Shoes event on Thursday, April 13. A group of Birmingham dames offered up their expertise to create a much-sought-after prize package. See the full story on page 3.*





# Bham Dames experience the flavors of Mexico

Letter, continued from page 1

breathtaking view of Lake Chapala and the Sierra del Tigre range. The day ended with dinner in Guadalajara.

The next morning we boarded the VIP Jose Cuervo train to Tequila. When we arrived at the station in Tequila, native dancers and musicians welcomed us. And not only did we tour the distillery, but we also saw agave plants from the fields being processed and participated in a tequila tasting class. After a stroll to the town center, we were treated to an evening of native dances and entertainment during dinner.

The networking, resourcefulness, commitment, passion, and enthusiasm of the Mexico LDEI Chapter made the “Flavors of Mexico” an incredible experience. I know that one day we will have the opportunity to present Birmingham to Dames from around the world. As you work and travel, glean ideas and contacts we can refer to when our time arrives and put them in an “incredible experience” file. If the Mexico group can do it with six women, just imagine what our members can do!

Best,  
Becky



Above: One of the native Mexican dancers with mariachis greeting the Jose Cuervo train’s arrival in Tequila, Mexico. At right: A home kitchen of one of the 24 Women of the Corn farmers associated with Maru Toledo’s cooking class in Teuchitlan, Mexico.



Left to right: Ashley Tarver, Gia McCollister, Becky Satterfield, Angela Schmidt, and Betsy McAtee standing in front of one of the circular pyramids at Guachimontones.

# At the table with Brooke Bell, secretary

By Christiana Roussel

When she is not directly overseeing the editorial teams of *Taste of the South*, *Louisiana Cookin’*, *Cooking with Paula Deen*, *Bake from Scratch* and *Southern Cast Iron*, you are as likely as not to find Brooke Bell emptying or filling a well-worn suitcase. As the director of editorial operations for Hoffman Media, Brooke logs some serious miles, all in the name of good food. It is a serious passion.

As a founding member of the Birmingham chapter of Les Dames d’Escoffier, she is easily buoyed by the fellowship this group naturally imparts, and is eager to share that camaraderie. She notes, “I love having an instant support group

in our industry, both locally and globally.”

And while her most recent cookbook, *Fall Baking*, was a “Number 1 New Release” on Amazon, Bell is especially honored to add the title of secretary to her bio, taking the mantle this year for our chapter. “I am so proud of where we’ve come from... I’ll never forget that first meeting at Iz on Rocky Ridge. In the next five years, I see us making a substantial impact in Birmingham through scholarships, fighting hunger, and the betterment of our food community. My goal as secretary, is for our group to be better known locally. We’re getting there, but there is still work to do!”

Brooke takes her title of Dame seriously, enjoying the global reach



our group possesses. “I’ve recently enjoyed Dames meet-ups in Charleston for Charleston Wine + Food and at IACP in Louisville. It’s truly special to have an immediate connection with other Dames, regardless of whether I am at home in Birmingham or traveling for work.”

# LDEI’s auction package helps BHF reach fundraising goals

By Christiana Roussel

Baptist Health Foundation held their first annual Wine, Women & Shoes event on Thursday, April 13, at The Club with a special live auction that featured an incredible LDEI Birmingham package. More than a dozen of our chapter’s members donated their time and talents to offer a one-of-a-kind bevy of experiences. From knife skills lessons to seats at an upcoming Jones Valley Teaching Farm GATHER dinner to touring Green Springs Highway international markets with a dame, our members’ contributions showed how vibrant this growing Les Dames chapter is.

The package really resonated with attendees who bid like crazy for these experiences. Ultimately, it



The lucky—and generous—winner, Eileen Meyer!

was bidder #227, Eileen Meyer, who beat out everyone else, with a winning bid of \$4,400! It was the highest grossing auction item of the night, helping BHF double

their fundraising goal by raising more than \$70,000. Incredible!

Kate Gillespie, Fund Development Coordinator for BHF, was effusive in her thanks to our chapter. She reiterated not only how much our participation means to them but how excited they are to partner with our chapter in the future, helping us grow and achieve our goals of empowering women in the food and hospitality industries.

Thanks again to all the dames who contributed to this package: Jennifer Yarbrough, Kathy Mezrano, Susan Swagler, Ashley Tarver, Sherron Goldstein, Susan Green, Jan Walsh, Becky Satterfield, Katherine Cobbs, Rachel West, Deb Wise, Amanda Storey, Christiana Roussel, Leigh Sloss-Corra, Idie Hastings, and Deborah Stone.



## LDEI community outreach: GirlSpring STEM Fair

By Martha Johnston

One of our Outreach Committee goals is to take advantage of opportunities to enrich our community. So when GirlSpring, Inc. called and asked LDEI to participate in a career fair, Linda Godfrey enthusiastically volunteered.

The GirlSpring STEM Fair was held on April 15, and focused on engaging girls from 6th through 12th grades in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math. Approximately 75 girls attended. Linda spoke on the main panel with other inspiring role models and then led an interactive session on nutrition. Reports indicate that the girls attending were really engaged with the ideas and examples she presented!



Dame Linda Godfrey sharing her nutrition expertise at the GirlSpring STEM Fair.

## Dames offer their expertise at the Gumbo Gala



Birmingham Dames had an awesome time judging Gumbo Gala XII at Sloss Furnace on April 22. They tasted gumbo and more gumbo during this benefit for Episcopal Place, apartments for the elderly and physically challenged. This is the second year Dames have been asked to judge.



## Meet Our New Members!

Our chapter gained 10 new members in August 2016. Here, get to know the remaining five of them a little better. The other five were featured in the February newsletter. Interviews by Christiana Roussel.

### Leigh Sloss-Corra

**Date of birth:** July 31, 1958  
(don't tell!)

**Place of birth:** Birmingham, AL  
**College/professional school(s) attended, major, degree earned:** Brown University, BA with honors - Comparative Literature and French; Columbia University, MA - Comparative Literature and English

**Current position:** The Market at Pepper Place Executive Director

**How did you get your start?**

I learned to cook from my maternal grandmother, head of the Home Economics Department at Jacksonville State University for 40 years, and from my paternal grandmother's cook, who taught us as children how to prepare the traditional dishes that she and we loved best. As a young adult, I ran a catering business in Manhattan for two years. When I moved back to Birmingham, I headed up Digital



Video at Southern Progress (2007 - 2015), and focused primarily on creating inspiring and beautiful how-to

cooking videos for 12 magazine brands. Now as head of The Market at Pepper Place, I work to make beautiful, fresh food available to all, and inspire market shoppers on how to enjoy it.

**What do you enjoy about your current position?**

I love fresh food, love anything that supports local economies, and love being a part of and helping the innovators and creative hard-working people in Alabama (farmers, food producers, and artisans) realize their dreams and become more successful.

**What does success look like to you?**  
A full and bustling market, with loads of variety, happy shoppers,

shopping bags full of fresh food, music, cool breeze, sunshiny day—every Saturday. A year or two from now I'd love to see that same scene with a vibrant and busy market hall at the center.

**If you could plan your last meal, what would it be?**

A beautiful piece of grilled fish, roasted fingerling potatoes, green salad with beets and apples or kumquats, crispy sauvignon blanc, lemon tart with blueberries for dessert.

**If you had one week free of all obligations and \$5,000, where would you go and what would you do?**

I'd explore the south of France, visit the markets and shops, immerse in the culture, food and fragrant air.

**Bonus!** I am divorced, but in a long-term relationship. My son, George, lives in Birmingham and works at Royal Cup Coffee and my daughter, Sophie, is based in NYC and works as a film editor.

### Jennifer Yarbrough

**Date of birth:** October 29, 1977

**Place of birth:** Florence, AL  
**College/professional school(s) attended, major, degree earned:** Auburn University, BA History

**Current position:** Co-owner of Crestline Bagel

**How did you get your start?**

Food and baking were a natural fit and interest for me. I was raised on



a farm with a fantastic cook, baker, and gardener for a mother.

**What do you enjoy about your current position and the industry in general?**

I love all of the creative people that I work with every day! It is so much

fun to go to work with creative people and practice your craft.

**What does success look like to you?**

Success looks like waking up every day and loving your job. In order to do that you have to be good at it and treat people well.

**What are you most passionate and enthusiastic about?** Traveling and experiencing new places.

**If you could plan your last meal, what would it be?** Anything Italian.

**Bonus!** I am married to Ralph and we have two sons, Houston and Yates.



## Ashley McMakin

**Date of birth:** December 21, 1979

**Place of birth:** Birmingham, AL

**College/professional school(s) attended, major, degree earned:** University of Alabama, degree in marketing

**Current position:** Owner and operator of Ashley Mac's

**How did you get your start?**

I grew up in a family that loves cooking and all things food so it came naturally. After college I started a little catering business as a hobby. A year later my husband joined me as a business partner and months later Ashley Mac's became official.

**What do you enjoy about your current position and the industry in general?** I love getting to know our employees and also work-



*"I love being in the food industry in such an up-and-coming foodie city! Birmingham has so much to offer in the world of food, and I'm thankful to be a small part of it."*

ing with them to put out quality products and quality service. My favorite technical part about my job is menu development. As for the industry in general, I love being in the food industry in such an up-and-coming foodie city! Birmingham has so much to offer in the world of food and I'm thankful to be a small part of it.

**What does success look like to you?** Success for me is using the gifts and talents God has given me to the best of my ability and trusting Him for each next step.

**What are you most passionate and enthusiastic about?** Adoption. We adopted our 3rd child from China and I love advocating for the 153 million orphans in the world!

**What do you like to do in your free time?** Zumba (I can't dance but I like to try!), read, try new restaurants, lay on the beach all day,

**If you could plan your last meal, what would it be?** A gourmet pizza, glass of red wine, and cheesecake.

**Bonus!** I am married to Andy and we have three children: Ryder (7), Jackson (5), and Mally (4)

## Christiana Roussel

**Date of birth:** December 11, 1969

**Place of birth:** Spartanburg, SC

**College/professional school(s) attended, major, degree earned:** B.A. Spanish, Vanderbilt University

**Current position:** Freelance Southern food and lifestyle writer

**How did you get your start?** I have worked in a lot of positions—credit card collector, theme park marketing assistant, HMO customer service supervisor—but it was DFW Dame Renie Steves who set me on my current path. Immediately after my husband and I moved to Fort Worth in 1997, my monthly *Bon Appetit* magazine arrived with a cover story on cooking schools. Renie's was one of those featured and I discovered she lived less than a mile from our new home. I wrote her a letter and told her I'd like to



work for her. I assisted her with recipe development and editing; I learned I really loved the process of bring-

ing culinary inspiration into reality. **What do you enjoy about your current position and the industry in general?** I started writing about food when a friend of mine who owned a local paper asked me to write a column for her. She liked it and got good feedback. So I wrote another and another and another. I found that what I really loved doing was meeting the people behind the food we eat. Whether it is a farmer or a chef or a cheese maker, I want to hear their stories and tell them to others in the best way I can.

**What does success look like to you?**

I enjoy being busy but setting my own schedule. In the Myers-Briggs test I am 50/50 introvert/extrovert so I need a good balance of activity and quiet; when I achieve that, I feel successful. Oh, and my other barometer of success will be having a piece published in *Garden & Gun*.

I pitch them stories regularly but have yet to have them say yes to one.

**If you could plan your last meal, what would it be?** A whole thin-crust pizza with fresh burrata and arugula and Meyer lemon oil, washed down with an ice-cold Miller Lite in a can.

**Bonus!** I am married to Ranson and we have two children, Amanda (18) and Jack (13). I like to add that I am 'in-between' flocks of chickens right now. We used to have seven hens and had to give them up in a move. I miss the ladies terribly.

## Kerry Kelley

**Date of birth:** I'm still a teenager.

**Place of birth:** Lafayette, LA

**College & professional school(s) attended/major or degree earned:**

I am passionate about watching people who I love succeed. My culinary background started young, and it's never left. Claude Rouas taught me palate and manners. He also taught me humility, and with perfection for food, it has driven me. Soup for the soul!

**Current position:** I'm a freelance restaurateur who wants this city's culinary roots to legacy! Birmingham has me by the heart. The talent that is here is exciting.



**How did you get your start?**

Being from Louisiana, food

and those culinary roots and how you were raised can't be duplicated. It's taught me how to love and appreciate the best parts and those that try, and never give up!

**What do you enjoy about your current position?** I am working with two powerful women who know palate and presentation. I am consulting for them, and we are moving forward on some of the best food Alabama has seen.

**What does success look like to you?** Lifting others up is always successful. These women have lifted me, and I will always proceed forward!

**What are you most passionate and enthusiastic about?** Setting others up for success. There is no greater calling!

**What do you like to do in your free time (hobbies, etc.)?** I love, love, love to read.

## Birmingham honors its most influential women in food

By Jan Walsh

Birmingham's most influential women chefs, restaurateurs, caterers and food writers were honored on March 22, at Highlands Bar and Grill during Women's History Month. Included among the women who were honored were members of the Birmingham chapter of Les Dames d'Escoffier.

Restaurateurs Betsy McAtee of Dreamland Bar-B-Que, Becky Satterfield of Satterfield's Restaurant (and coming in 2018, El Zunzun, a Latin restaurant in Cahaba Heights), Andrea Snyder of Urban Cookhouse, and Pardis Stitt of Highlands Bar and Grill, Bottega Cafe, Bottega Restaurant, and Chez Fonfon all spoke at the event.

Paul DeMarco, an Alabama state representative who helped organize the event, welcomed everyone. Birmingham City Councilor Valerie Abbott shared a resolution honoring



the women. And Mindy B. Hanan of the Alabama Restaurant and Hospitality Association congratulated the group.

After the event a group of the women gathered next door for lunch at Chez Fonfon, making new friends and networking.



# The Accidental Food Writer

A celebrated, local writer talks about food in Birmingham then and now.

By Susan Swagler

Dame Jo Ellen O'Hara got her start as a food journalist, in part, because she is a woman, but she quickly made the job her own. Her career as one of the most respected food editors in the country spanned more than four decades, connecting her with hundreds of thousands of readers.

Jo Ellen joined *The Birmingham News* in 1960 after graduating from the University of Alabama with an undergraduate degree in home economics and a master's degree in journalism. "There were limited opportunities in the late '50s for women in any field," she says, but she applied for a job at the paper on a Tuesday and was hired on Wednesday. As a young reporter, Jo Ellen covered hard news as well as features. She wrote about health and fashion and home furnishings. She covered the very high-profile murder case of civic leader Virginia Simpson in 1977.

"I kind of backed into food," she says. She had been at the paper for a few years when the previous, longtime food editor retired. Jo Ellen's editors looked to her to fill that position because of her home ec studies, but she recalls thinking to herself, "No, I don't believe I want to be the food editor," and she turned down the job. "Then the man who was in charge, Vincent Townsend, said, 'Fine, Miss O'Hara. You'll take over on Monday.' And I did. So that was the way I backed into it. And I loved it. The happiest moments of my life have been spent around



Jo Ellen O'Hara, the food editor of *The Birmingham News* for more than four decades, got her start when opportunities for women were hard to come by.

food and people involved with food."

Her job took her to Europe—Denmark, France, Italy, Switzerland and Germany—as well as to restaurants and kitchens all across the country. "People in food are some of the nicest people you'll ever know," she says. "It's because they work with the earth and its bounty and they are just nice people." She also judged a number of cooking contests on the national level; she served as a judge at four Pillsbury Bake-Offs, something she especially enjoyed.

"It's a lot of fun because these are basic, real Americans. They're just salt of the earth kinds of people, and you can't say one's a socialite and one's a little lady who cooks from her downhome kitchen. They're just a nice mix of people

that you really do like." She recalls one winning contestant who later told her she entered the contest because her child needed an eye operation that would cost \$75,000. "The woman said, 'I entered this because I thought maybe I could help get that money.' That was a happy moment. You can't make up things like that."

Jo Ellen has seen tremendous changes in Birmingham's food scene.

She remembers when there were only a handful of go-to restaurants like John's Restaurant (now John's City Diner) and La Patee. That changed, she said, in the early '80s when Frank Stitt came along. "He was talented beyond belief. And he had studied with all the big guys around the country and in Europe. Frank just took off and

never looked back. There have been other people, too, who were highly successful—like Chris Hastings." These chefs and others like them, she adds, changed the city's dining expectations. Restaurants that were "a good place to go for dinner" turned into "a wonderful place for a dining experience." Birmingham, she says, is a food town now.

Every Wednesday for 45 years, Jo Ellen had a food story in *The News*. "Sometimes you aimed to broaden (the readers') horizons beyond Jefferson County or sometimes the state of Alabama or sometimes the nation, and other times you tried to give them ideas about what they could do with what they had at home that would be good for their family, that they would enjoy, that had a little bit of a different twist to it.

"I had a lot of fun doing what I did. You never get tired of it. Every day is a new day. You never say, 'Oh, gosh, what am I going to write today?' It's really a lot of fun."

She says, "I met a lot of people who were very interesting, who brought new energy to the concept of food and dining. I met Martha Stewart at a Kmart. She met me at 7 o'clock in the morning. You can say what you want to about Martha Stewart, but anybody who will meet you at 7 o'clock in the morning has got to be OK."

Under Jo Ellen's direction, the newspaper brought in its own food critics and a wine critic. "By the time that ended, we had four (food critics). They all represented different outlooks in life, but they were good food writers and honest food writers."

Over four decades in the business, Jo Ellen saw food writing change tremendously. "I think you got a

*"I had a lot of fun doing what I did. You never get tired of it. Every day is a new day. You never say, 'Oh, gosh, what am I going to write today?'"*

—Jo Ellen O'Hara

lot more respect. I think that may have followed from women themselves getting more respect, but I think you got a lot more respect for what you did. And people took you seriously."

Jo Ellen says the Birmingham chapter of Les Dames d'Escoffier International is "wonderful, absolutely wonderful." She had long dreamed of a local chapter, but she says, "I just never thought Birmingham was big enough. That was my thinking small. But I was really thrilled that Les Dames came to Birmingham. We've become international, and that's a wonderful

thing for a city of our size."

She has this advice for women in food: "I think you have to look for your niche today. There are so many opportunities. You just have to look for a place where you feel comfortable and where you feel like you can move on or move up or if you're happy and you want to stay where you stay, that's fine, too. I stayed in one place for many, many years and loved it all.

"Life happens," she adds, "and you go down trails you never thought you'd go. And you end up having a wonderful time, and that's exactly what I did."

## .....Events Calendar.....

Tuesday,  
May 9

6 p.m.



Book Club: *The Belly of Paris*  
by Emile Zola  
at Chez Fonfon

Monday, June 5

5 to 7 p.m.

Social hour with potential new members at Ovenbird

Wednesday,  
June 21

6 to 8 p.m.

Champagne tasting  
at Bottega Courtyard

Saturday,  
July 15

TBD

Field Trip to Auburn/Opelika:  
Acre Café &  
John Emerald Distilling Co.



## Lunch at WE Café

By Christiana Roussel

The ides of March brought several Birmingham dames together for lunch at WE Community Café in Birmingham's West End neighborhood. On March 15, over bowls of gumbo and slices of warm cornbread, Susan Swagler, Becky Stayner, Sherron Goldstein, and Christiana Roussel caught up on events and learned more about WE Community Café, a project that is near and dear to Swagler and her family.

Her older daughter, Allison, is getting married in October, and WE Café will be catering the rehearsal dinner. "Allison and Will love WE Community Café and its mission of neighborhood empowerment," Susan says. "They want to include and support a non-profit in their wedding celebration, and having Ama Shambulia and WE cater the rehearsal dinner will let them do that and share an amazing meal with their guests. Last I heard, the menu will include chicken and waffles, and I believe Will is especially happy about that."

To learn more about the WE Community Café, go to Susan's Alabama Newscenter story here: <http://alabamane.wscenter.com/2016/04/20/urban-ministries-community-cafe-eatin/>

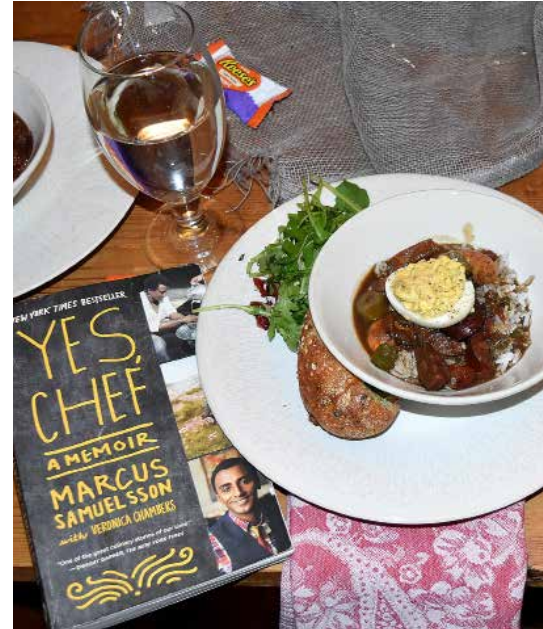
## Book Club



Pictured left to right, front: Susan Nash Gilpin, Susan Swagler, Laura Zapalowski, Gia McCollister. Rear: Rosalyn Bloomston, Susan Green, Deb Wise, Idie Hastings, Jan Gautro, Ashley Tarver, Martha Johnston

By Martha Johnston

*Yes, Chef* by Marcus Samuelsson was the topic of discussion when our group met in February at Jan Gautro's home. Following a delicious gumbo supper, Susan Swagler began the discussion on Samuelsson's stories about love of food and family coupled with his talent and ambition. It was a perfect lead into each attendee sharing her personal food story. Everyone left feeling they knew their fellow Dames a little better.



## Dames host potential new member social event

By Martha Johnston

Becky Satterfield hosted a garden social on April 24, for Birmingham Dames to get to know potential members. While enjoying a glass of wine and a variety of appetizers, Becky and the Board shared that LDEI is an invitational organization of women leaders in food, beverage, and hospitality, whose mission is education, advocacy, mentoring, and philanthropy.

Our guests learned the Birmingham chapter was founded in 2013 with 55 members—one of the largest initial memberships in the history of the organization. It includes women who are professional chefs, restaurateurs, sommeliers, caterers, farmers, food retailers, event planners, cookbook authors, food journalists and photographers, test-kitchen professionals, food stylists, winemakers and wine industry professionals, food publicists, food-service professionals, culinary educators and hospitality executives.

Gia McCollister, Vice President of Membership, told the nominees that the LDEI member who is nominating them will be mentoring each of them through the entire process.



Birmingham dames gather for a garden party at President Becky Satterfield's home to introduce potential new members to what LDEI is doing in the community and our goals for the future.



She asked everyone to note the deadlines and especially the dates for interviews for the candidates, June 13 and 14. All the application materials are to be delivered to Gia

no later than 5 p.m. on June 1.

For those who were not able to attend, Gia said there is still time to nominate potential members. If you have questions, give her a call.

## Coming soon: Board member nominations

By Martha Johnston

Leadership plays a critical role in keeping the Birmingham chapter of LDEI moving toward a strong future. With that in mind, it's time to consider who we want as our future leaders. The nominating committee will be accepting nominations for Vice President of Programs and Treasurer.

On May 22, you will receive information via email on the nominating procedure, officer commitment requirements, and specific duties for the offices we will be filling. Please consider who would be an effective leader, best meet the needs of the membership, and be willing to commit her leadership skills, time, and abilities to our organization.

Members can self nominate or nominate another Dame. Both Pardis Stitt [VP of Programs] and Beba Touloupis [Treasurer] are more than willing to share what the responsibilities and time commitment are for each office. More specific details will come with the request for nominations on May 22. Applications will be due by Friday, June 16.



# Behind the scenes: Opening a restaurant

By Martha Johnston

Have you ever given serious thought to opening a restaurant? If so, then you might be interested in a few of the challenges Ashley Tarver has encountered with Za'atar Bar + Kitchen, her new farm to table meets modern Mediterranean restaurant in the making at Pepper Place Market.

Once the process began, Ashley says she realized that she saw every restaurant she walked into with new eyes. She now counts the seats, flips over the plates to see who makes them, weighs silverware in her hands.

"I never expected how many times I'd be asked when Za'atar is opening," Ashley says. She appreciates that people are excited but has found that so much of it is out of her control thanks to government entities. "I wish I knew the opening date!"

Waking up in the middle of the night to email reminders and to-do lists to herself is a new experience. But she's getting used to it. And she has learned to make herself take a break by turning off her phone or walking her dog without her phone.

Ashley says she never expected she would reach the limit of information her brain could actually hold. Her solution has been to resort to sticky notes, notebooks, and her human sidekick/director of operations to be the other half of her brain. She added it has helped that the sidekick is learning to finish her sentences.

When asked how she feels this adventure now, Ashley smiled and said, "Not for one second do I regret it!"



Dame Ashley Tarver's restaurant, Za'atar Bar + Kitchen will open at Pepper Place Market sometime in 2017.



# An update from the fund raising meeting

By Jan Walsh

The Birmingham chapter of Les Dames d'Escoffier held a mandatory meeting at Satterfield's Restaurant on Sunday, February 19, 2017.

President Becky Satterfield introduced the speaker, Kathi Ash, who served as executive director with the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation for 10 years and executive director of the Robert E. Reed Gastrointestinal Oncology Research Foundation for 14 years. In her 24-year career, she helped raise \$7,000,000 through various fundraisers. Ash discussed fund raising generally and shared her ideas for the Birmingham chapter's fund raiser. Key points from Ash's speech were as follows:

- Determine a budget, working from the bottom line backwards.
- Keep expenses down, with the exception of the first year when a "big splash" is likely necessary to capture an audience.

• Decide on a venue that lends itself to the event's theme and the purpose of the event. (Although she did not mention it, we obviously need to decide on our theme, such as an auction, before considering venues.)

• Determine the number of volunteers. Recruit volunteers and motivate them with the big-picture view of what they are working towards. Communicate clearly what is expected of them and of our members.

• Determine the date, place, and time of the event.

• Use all resources available to promote the event. She further offered an example event of "Celebrity Chefs of Birmingham" serving tables at the fund raiser. This idea was not discussed further by the group after the speaker left.

Next, members of the chapter spoke and asked questions. Sherron

Goldstein shared her perspective on our chapter, while Gia McCollister, vice president of membership gave an impassioned talk about the importance of the Birmingham chapter's work. She explained that the group is not a social club. And she challenged each member to dedicate herself to doing her part, showing up to meetings and events, including the 2017 LDEI Annual Conference. It will be held October 26 through 29 at the Island Hotel in Newport Beach, CA. Hosted by the Los Angeles/Orange County chapter, the meeting will take as its theme "California Dreaming: Experiencing California Cuisine from Farm to Table."

Also discussed was our newsletter, social media, bank balance, need for a scholarship for 2017 using current available funds with Martha Johnston and Ashley Tarver contributing their thoughts and questions.

## Dames Recommend

*Kathy Mezrano*

Kathy Mezrano has just returned from a trip to **Northern Italy** with visits to Treviso, Verona, and Parma. She loved the location of Hotel Accademia in Verona and found the following restaurants worth a visit: 12 Apostoli, Old World Italy, and Il Cenacola [The Last Supper]. Rissoto

with Amarone is a specialty in this area. Another favorite was the lunch and tour of Marchesi di Barolo in Emilio Romano region. She found the food valley of Italy, Parma, one of her favorites and took advantage of the trip to tour the dairy making Parmigiano-Reggiano and a factory making Prosciutto de Parma.

*Rachel West*

Where to go: **Vancouver, Canada**  
Where to eat: "I wish I could have eaten at Jam Café multiple times. Everything we ordered, including the Brioche French Toast and Chorizo Benedict, was simply fantastic—and there were so many other things on the menu I wanted to try."



# Let's Toast



*Fresh strawberries at Pepper Place Market, now open for its 18th season.*

**Rosalyn Bloomston** will retire June 1, after 34 years her Creative Cuisine Catering business. She is planning to write a cookbook of her recipes and all those she has collected over the years.

**Maureen Holt** has accepted a position as Culinary Consultant and Special Events Coordinator at Lawson State Community College Culinary Arts Program. She will continue working on the Southern Graze Pop Up Series and will cater small private events.

**Annette Thompson** recently debuted her new digital publication, [www.SecondChanceTravels.com](http://www.SecondChanceTravels.com). The online magazine features stories for readers who are ready to follow their postponed dreams of travel and career.



This site, presenting features on adventure travel, culinary travel, and women's golf, is written by women for women. Second Chance Travels includes personality profiles of individuals creating ways to break out of the norm and explore the world on their own terms. Annette encourages you to check out the site and sign up for the bi-weekly newsletter that delivers fresh stories to your In Box. Annette, a freelance journalist, is a past travel editor at Southern Living magazine as well as a Past President of the Society of American Travel Writers.

**Jan Walsh**, celebrated the 10th Anniversary of BirminghamRestaurants.com. She was a pioneer in 2007 as most businesses, including restaurants, didn't have a website. Clients were presold on this one-stop shop for foodies to find the best restaurants in Birmingham

as well as their menus and special events. The business continues to grow.

Pepper Place Market has opened for the 18th season according to **Cathy Sloss Jones**, Chair of the Friends of the Market Board. **Pardis Stitt** has been a board member for over 10 years, and **Leigh Sloss-Corra** serves as the market's executive director. **Idie Hastings** (OvenBird) and **Ashley Tarver** (Za'atar Bar + Kitchen) have restaurants in the Pepper Place complex. **Ashley McMakin** (Ashley Mac's), Ashley Tarver (Copper Pot Kitchen), and **Laura Zapalowski** (Homewood Gourmet) have significantly grown their food businesses by selling at the market. And Idie Hastings, **Maureen Holt**, **Rebecca Lang**, **Kathy Mezrano**, **Angela Schmidt**, Pardis Stitt, Ashley Tarver and Laura Zapalowski have all done chef demos there. The Market at Pepper Place is also proud to be offering SNAP (food stamp) shoppers with matching Double Up Food Bucks to low-income families, so that more people can have access to fresh food.

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