



Les Dames d'Escoffier
INTERNATIONAL



Founded in 2013

Ideibirmingham.org

Winter 2018

President's Note: Sharing Our Strengths

Dear Dames,

At our annual meeting, Gia McCollister rightly pointed out the amazing work done by our two previous chapter presidents. Angela Schmidt, she said, got us organized. Becky Satterfield, she said, led us to raise more money and significantly build our scholarship fund.

Then she asked me: "What kind of president will you be?"

I've been thinking a lot about Gia's question, about what strengths I can bring to this job. I'm organized, but fundraising is not my favorite thing to do. I am my best self as a communicator. So my goal, as president, is to communicate to as many people as possible who we are and what we do. I want Les Dames d'Escoffier Birmingham to be a household name in our community.

But that is a huge job, and I'm going to need your help. We have to share our strengths. You all have roles to play in our chapter—whether you write articles for our newsletter, post to our social media sites, make foods for various events, serve on our board, secure

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Southern Soirée Exceeds Expectations!



The fundraiser, held on Sunday, October 7, at Jones Valley Teaching Farm raised more than \$45,000! Photo by Joe DeScione.

By Jan Walsh

When a group of women with successful culinary careers plan a fundraiser dinner, one would expect a delicious meal. And when LDEI Birmingham members and local foodies gathered for the group's annual fundraiser, Southern Soirée, on October 7, at Jones Valley Teaching Farm, the dinner surpassed all expectations!

Perhaps even more thrilling is

that the amount of money raised exceeded our \$40,000 goal and totaled over \$45,000, which means more and/or larger scholarships and grants for women in the culinary arts. These include the Entrepreneur Award, Community Non-Profit Award, grants for local high school teachers, and scholarships for college students pursuing food, nutrition, or culinary degrees.

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Kathy Mezrano, chair of the fundraiser committee, inspired the group to greatness with her vision for this year's event, which included farm tables, the much-commented-on fruit-studded candelabras, and a musical trio, The Old-Fashioned Rhythm Method, playing a trumpet, tuba, and tenor banjo. She added some new features, including a large tent, string lights, and fans, that made the space more beautiful and comfortable.

Pardis Stitt came up with the dinner menu: original Auguste Escoffier recipes that were reimagined with a Southern twist by a number of our talented Dames, including Mezrano, Kay Reed, Mary Grace Viado, Ashley McMakin, and Deborah Stone.

An array of beverages awaited guests as they entered the farm and continued throughout the evening. The signature cocktail—developed exclusively for our event by bartender Steva Casey of The Atomic Lounge—was a refreshing and beautiful sipper of Cathead Vodka, manzanilla sherry, fig syrup, and lemon juice with fresh basil for garnish. It was perfect for toasting this amazing evening. Alexis Douglas worked with Eileen Hallmark of The Sorting Table and International Wines to choose French wines to complement the menu, including Triennes Rose, Jean Baptiste Adam Pinot Blanc, and Auguste Rouge. Local beer by Back Forty Beer Company was served and included Naked Pig and Truck Stop Honey. Buffalo Rock kept thirsts quenched with bubbly and still waters, and cold-brew coffee was provided by H.C. Valentine.

Guests began the dinner by milling about with their beverages



Above: The appetizers were served plated to make it easy for guests to pick up.

Right: The musical trio, the Old-Fashioned Rhythm Method, provides the music.

Photos by Joe DeScione.



in hand, nibbling on an hors d'oeuvres plate including anchovy butter on artisan rye bread, cheese, and cornichons, pickled okra and other Southern vegetables; a stellar cold leek and potato soup was passed by our student volunteers in demitasse cups.

The main course was served buffet-style and starred beef bourguignon with mushrooms, rice pilaf, Provençale-style beans, and cucumber and pimiento salad. And for dessert, a memorable banana pudding with homemade vanilla wafers that ended the evening on a sweet Southern note.

A silent auction, another new

addition to this year's event that was organized by President Susan Swagler, included a variety of experiences with Dames who were willing to donate their time and unique talents with winning bidders. "The silent auction shows people who we are and what we can do," said Swagler.

Silent auction lots included Behind the Scenes with James Beard Award-winning pastry chef Dolester Miles and Jan Walsh (and went for \$500!); a private tour of the Market at Pepper Place Private and an OvenBird brunch with Leigh Sloss-Corra and Idie Hastings (\$400); Around the World on

"We are doing amazing things that make a difference in people's lives. And, we're doing it together."

—Chapter President Susan Swagler



Photo by Mo Davis

Green Springs with Susan Swagler (\$250); Biscuit Baking with Becky Satterfield (\$200); Bagel Maker for a Day with Jennifer Yarbrough (\$165); heart-healthy cooking classes taught by Rosemary Dallam and Pat Terry (\$310); a phyllo fun day with Sonthe Burge (\$150); a professional knife skills class with Ashley Tarver (\$140); and professional knife sharpening by Susan Green (\$120).

Our public relations and marketing team led by Rachel West and Leigh Sloss-Corra put together an extensive social media and public relations plan that resulted in extensive coverage for the event and Les Dames as the organization that empowers women in the food industry. Major articles appeared in *Birmingham* magazine, *Over The*

Mountain Journal, and *StyleBlueprint*. A video created by Sloss-Corra and Katherine Cobbs debuted on *Portico Mountain Brook's* Instagram account and ads for the event were featured in *B-Metro* and the *Birmingham Business Journal*. Idie Hastings, Ashley McMakin, and Becky Satterfield were also featured speakers at the sold-out *Birmingham Business Journal* annual Women's Summit luncheon (see page 16). The chapter also sponsored a food film screening at the Sidewalk Film Festival and some of our members took the opportunity to share delicious gold-dusted chocolate cake samples made by Telia Johnson and pass out event info to attendees (see page 20).

Idie Hastings, who has been inspired by the awards and schol-

arships our chapter has given, took the lead in fundraising and donations. "I feel a great deal of satisfaction knowing that I am fulfilling opportunities for creative young women through our philanthropy," she said. Hastings, Martha Johnston, and Gia McColister maximized their contacts and approached local companies who share like priorities. Their strategies proved successful in exceeding the fundraising goal.

Lead sponsors for the event included: Sysco Central Alabama, Medical Properties Trust, Alabama Power, the *Birmingham Business Journal*, Altec Industries, Jemison Investment Co. Inc, and Warren Averett. Other sponsors were

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Fundraiser, continued from page 3

Urban Cookhouse; El ZunZún; Montgomery Environmental; EBSCO Industries; American Family Care; Lightfoot, Franklin & White LLC; H.C. Valentine; Dreamland Bar-B-Que; The Caring Foundation of Blue Cross and Blue Shield; ServisFirst; Homewood Gourmet; birminghamrestaurants.com; *B-Metro*; Village Tavern; The Bright Star; Cobbs Allen & Hall; Hot & Hot Fish Club; OvenBird; Pearce, Bevill, Leesburg, Moore LLC; John and Julie Mills; Kathy G. & Co.; Merrill Lynch; and Chester’s International.

Other gifts and in-kind donations were received from Jones Valley Teaching Farm, Cathead Vodka, Ice by Design, The Sorting Table, International Wines & Craft Beers, ERU, AG Lighting and Events, Herc Rentals, Back Forty Beer, Alabama Cattlemen’s Association, Evan’s Meats, Hinkel’s Bakery, Buffalo Rock/Pepsi, Steva Casey, J-Rag Inc, Caroline Rather, April and John Colburn, MOTE Holdings LLC, Cathy Sloss Jones, James and Joan Rein, Robin Mobley, John Walton, Philippe Lathrop, and Judy Crittenden.

During the event, Becky Satterfield and Rosemary Dallam thanked sponsors and attendees from the stage. They also introduced all of our 2018 scholarship, award, and teacher grant recipients. Sonthe Burge and Swagler managed ticketing for guests and sponsors. Pat Terry and Dallam organized and directed a large and energetic group of student volunteers.

“This organization is like no other,” Swagler said. “We are doing amazing things that make a difference in people’s lives. And, we’re doing it together.”



Above: Our teacher grant recipients and Entrepreneur Award winner.

Right: Some of our scholarship winners.

Below right: Attendees bid on dame-led experiences during the silent auction.

Below top: Mary Grace Viado’s memorable vichyoisise. Below bottom: The stunning ice sculpture created by Ice by Design. Photos by Joe DeScione.



Top: The vine-covered arbor housed the biergarten where Back Forty Beers were served along with LDEI koozies. Photo by Mo Davis.

Below right: Kay Reed’s homemade banana pudding with vanilla wafers was a sweet—a popular—finish to the meal. Photo by Joe DeScione.

Below left: The Escoffier-inspired menu prepared by a handful of our talented dames was served buffet-style on candelabra-lined farm tables. Photo by Joe DeScione.

sponsorships for Southern Soirée, mentor young people, or donate your time and talents for publicity-building efforts. There's more, of course, and we all can, and *should*, do something. Each of us has contributions to make.

So, with that said, I want you to think about where your own gifts and talents and interests lie. I'm asking you: "What kind of member do you want to be?"

We all are different, and that's the beauty of our organization. Our strengths are awesome and varied. Southern Soirée is the perfect example. (Please see Jan Walsh's article in this newsletter for details of that amazing evening, but allow me to mention the Soirée committee. These women worked so hard!)

Kathy Mezrano was a truly excellent leader; she inspired us to greatness with her organization; ideas; and cool, collected presence from the earliest days of planning to the cleanup that night. I also am proud of Kay Reed who made sure the food was as beautiful as it was delicious. Martha Johnston and Idie Hastings and Gia really know how to raise money and sponsorships and secure trades. Pardis came up with a lovely menu, and Kay, Kathy, Mary Grace Viado, Ashley McMakin, Deborah Stone and Alexis Douglas made it happen.

Rachel West and Leigh Sloss-Corra worked tirelessly on our media and outreach and the program and signage. Pat Terry and Rosemary Dallam made sure we had lots of smiling, capable student volunteers. Rosemary and Becky Satterfield did a fine job with our program. And I am grateful to Sonthe Burge for her leadership with the Dame volunteers and her help with ticketing.

A huge and sincere thank you to all the Dames who contributed money to our cause through donations and ticket purchases and to those who stepped in that day and night to pull this all together. Jan Walsh, Laura Zapalowski, Idie, Becky, Betsy McAtee, Mary Grace, Kathy G., Cathy Sloss Jones, Maureen Holt, Brittany Garrigus, Andrea Snyder, Angela Schmidt, Barbara Kenyon, Kate Nicholson, Anne Cain, Kathryn Strickland, Mary Esther Carpenter, Telia Johnson, Jan Gautro, Sidney Fry, Beba Touloupis, Leslie Register, Erin Isbell, Susan Gilpin, Rebel Negley, and Cheryl Slocum: all were important to our success.

Thank you, also, to Susan Green, Sherron Goldstein, and Roslyn Bloomston for manning the silent auction. And special thanks to every Dame who contributed her time and talents for those Damed experiences! The auction raised

money for us (enough to fund two scholarships) but, just as importantly, it showed people who we are and what we can do.

For those of you who missed being there, I am truly sorry. It was a magical evening. I hope to see every Dame there next time. The Soirée is our biggest fundraiser and one of our best opportunities to impact our community and spread the word of who we are. We all need to have some ownership in that.

We'll begin planning for the next Soirée soon. Meanwhile, here's something you all can do today—right now—to embrace your role in our organization:

Add the words "Member, Birmingham Chapter of Les Dames d'Escoffier International" to all your correspondence, your email signatures, social media handles and your professional resume. If you are a founding member, say so. If you are an officer, tell people. Start a conversation with this information. It's the first step in branding ourselves as the organization of and for the top women in food in Birmingham.

I'm very much looking forward to working with each of you.

Best always,

Susan Swagler
President, LDEI Birmingham

Cheers to LDEI Birmingham's newest faces!



On Thursday, September 27, we welcomed our nine new members (above, only Rebecca Williamson couldn't be there!) during a reception at the Gardens Café. Kathy G. & Co. provided a beautiful assortment of appetizers and desserts (below) as well as wine. Below right (left to right): Melany Robinson, Martha Johnston, and Leigh Sloss-Corra.



All photos by Mo Davis.

Meet Our New Members!

Our chapter gained nine new members in August 2018. Here, get to know the first four of these extraordinary women a little better. The other five will be featured in the Spring 2019 newsletter.

Barbara Gaines Kenyon

Place of birth: Birmingham, AL
College/professional school(s) attended, major, degree earned: Auburn University, Bachelor’s in Human Development and Family Studies; Master of Science in Nutrition and Food Science with Focus on Event Management
Current position: Owner and founder of Happy Event Company
How did you get your start? Having a master’s in event management gave me a specialized skillset that allowed me to be awarded a visa to work in the United Kingdom in 2003. I accepted a job in London, England as the event manager at one of West London’s most coveted venues: Warren House. I knew I



I absolutely LOVE serving people and making them happy! I started my own company so that I could do this by applying my creativity through designing and managing special events.
What does success look like to you? First and foremost, I am a mother. My strongest desire is to take care of my two young sons and provide for them in the greatest possible way. In order to do this, I strive to succeed in my career in the hospitality industry. If I can earn a living while positively impacting others’ lives by making them feel

loved my career but this job confirmed it for me.
What do you enjoy about your current position?

loved, valued and appreciated, then I have succeeded!
If you could plan your last meal, what would it be? I wouldn’t be very particular regarding the menu; I would trust my best chef friends with that. :) I would just ask to be surrounded with my family and my most favorite people, in the most fun and most beautiful party in the world and I’ll be one happy girl!
If you had one week free of all obligations and \$5,000, where would you go and what would you do? I want to go to Exuma: soak up the sun, meet the locals, eat good food, and—most importantly—swim with the pigs!
Bonus: I have 2 sons, Rivers (8) and Shields (5). I love British culture! I love the color pink! I love to skateboard! And I use exclamation marks entirely way too much! ;)

Andrea Griffith

Place of birth: Philadelphia, PA
College/professional school(s) attended, major, degree earned: Art Institute of Philadelphia; Greenbrier Apprenticeship
Current position: Executive chef at Pursell Farms in Sylacauga, AL
How did you get your start? I began cooking as a young child helping my dad cook for the guys at the fire department. I knew that I wanted to be a chef and that no other career would work for me. I spent time in all of the kitchens in Philadelphia staging to gain knowl-



edge. I worked for four master chefs and did a majority of my training at the Greenbrier as an apprentice. After graduation I decided to stay around West Virginia and become the head chef to open the Greenbrier Sporting Club. I stayed for 5 years and from there opened the Primland Resort in Virginia. I stayed there for 5 years and then came to the Pursell Farms and have been loving it ever since.

What do you enjoy about your current position? Getting to know guests and interact with other industry professionals.
What does success look like to you? Serving great food, giving great service, and having great customer service.

If you could plan your last meal, what would it be? Sushi, ramen, and bao buns.
If you had one week free of all obligations and \$5,000, where would you go and what would you do? I would take my dad on a trip to Rome.
Bonus! I’m left-handed.

Kathryn Strickland

Place of birth: Birmingham, AL
College/professional school(s) attended, major, degree earned: Davidson College, B.A.; Illinois School of Professional Psychology, M.A.
Current position: Executive Director, Community Food Bank of Central Alabama
How did you get your start? I was directing another nonprofit and started volunteering at my local food bank. It changed the trajectory of my career. .
What do you enjoy about your current position? We work with people from all walks of life around



a common mission to ensure no one goes hungry. Our work is both challenging and meaningful.
What does success look like to you? To have led as many different lives as possible.
If you could plan your last meal, what would it be? I imagine really digging into my last meal. So, I’d start in the garden with a fresh salad complete with sun sugar tomatoes, followed by a spicy medley of chana marsala, dal, and biryani. Instead of naan, I would choose injera so I could eat it all with my hands and fingers! Of course,

chocolate, chocolate, chocolate for dessert, followed by a brimming cup of cinnamon tea.
If you had one week free of all obligations and \$5,000, where would you go and what would you do? I just rewatched the documentary series a Chef’s Table so right now I would like to travel to the dreamy forest where the Baekyangsa Temple is nestled outside of Seoul. I would visit the Buddhist monk-chef Jeong Kwan’s garden, take her overnight course on temple food and experience her beautiful, earthy meals.
Bonus! In a former life, I worked as an outdoor guide and traveled across Mongolia on horseback. Mutton was the trip staple.

Cheryl Slocum

Place of birth: Philadelphia, PA
College/professional school(s) attended, major, degree earned: Master of Science, Public Policy and Management, Carnegie Mellon University; Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, Lehman College; Grand Diplome, French Culinary Institute
Current position: Freelance writer, recipe developer and editor; in the process flaunting my own brand—The Family Feed
How did you get your start? In the culinary field, I first worked in a restaurant called Waters Edge and the chef took me under his wing. it was a very instructive time.
What do you enjoy about your current position? Owning my the I enjoy the freedom to express myself creatively. I also enjoy sharing what I know with my audience to help them become stronger cooks and have an easier



path to cooking more.
What does success look like to you? Success look like earning enough to sustain my self and my family without having to compromise my principles and standards. Success means earning respect and admiration from my colleagues.
If you could plan your last meal, what would it be? It would be an eclectic mix: A lobster roll, something with bacon—maybe a lardon and frisee salad, a steamed artichoke, a cheese plate that includes some nuts and olives, and strawberry shortcake.
If you had one week free of all obligations and \$5,000, where would you go and what would you do? Maybe return to Sintra in Portugal and search for the nuns who make the Travessiero pastries

and try to see if they would let me learn how to make it. And just enjoy that magical little town.
Bonus! As a child my family vacations were most often camping trips. I had the great opportunity to see so much of the U.S. on these adventures. We explored a wide swath of New England over the years and one summer took an 8-week trip traveling across the country checking out our national parks and everything else along the way. I will never forget having my first Nehi-soda in New Mexico, climbing all around Mesa Verde cliff dwellings, seeing the wonders of the Grand Canyon, those incredible sequoias, and especially my first taste of rainbow trout that our campsite neighbors at Yellowstone caught and gave to our family to enjoy for dinner. My mom did some sort of simple cornmeal crust and pan-fried the filets. The moment is etched into my brain and taste buds.

Seattle: Gray Skies and Bright Ideas Conference

By Rebel Negley

Becky Satterfield and I traveled to Seattle, WA, on October 10. Since I am a new member, it was my first time to attend the conference. However, Becky has been to many events, so she was a wonderful travel partner and guide. We arrived in the afternoon at the Renaissance Marriott in Downtown Seattle. Immediately, we were greeted by Dames from all over the country and the world! As everyone trickled in, we began to make introductions and learn more about each other. I was so excited to meet so many women from a variety of food, culinary, and writing fields.

Chapter Leadership Forum

Haley Matson-Mathis, International LDEI President from Hawaii, opened this October 11, forum with a traditional Hawaiian greeting. The room had a great vibe and was filled with excited women eager to share. Haley introduced Beth Vlasichpav who spoke about “Building Members One Dame at a Time” and emphasized the importance of strategic planning and recruiting. She stressed that each chapter should have “ambassadors” for LDEI who can create awareness of our goals and mission and speak to other community groups.

Vlasichpav challenged chapters to answer the following questions in breakout sessions that followed:

- What is the plan to keep new members engaged?
- Do you have a new member committee to keep your newest members engaged?
- What is your new member “on boarding” process?
- Do you make a “big deal” over new members with a specific event, press



Many interesting fundraising ideas were shared during roundtable discussions in Seattle.

releases to introduce the new members, and committee assignments to get them immediately involved?

- Do you have a picture directory so new members can learn names and faces?
- Do you have individual sponsors to support a new member for at least one year?
- Do you survey members?
- Do you have regular board and membership meetings?
- Are you reaching out or just inviting women you know to join LDEI? Do you have appropriate recruiting materials?
- Do you always keep in mind the good of the whole organization?

Each table worked on how they would handle some of the points outlined above. I found a lot of the “bright ideas” heightened my excitement and enthusiasm. Becky was

delighted to nudge me often and tell me that “we already do that.”

“How Do You Find New Members?” by Julie Chernoff

Chernoff recommended the Equality at the Table website by Julia Tersher. It is locator for women in food who are racially and culturally diverse, and she feels is a good place to find new members and encourage diversity.

She suggested chapters focus on the “quality” of members versus “quantity.” A form on the chapter’s website for prospects to fill out if they are interested in joining might be useful. The Seattle chapter has found it to be a useful tool.

The recruiting of “younger” members seems to be hard for some chapters. It’s been helpful in some chapters to have “sponsors” to pay

dues for the new recruits. Another issue with younger members is that if they are entrepreneurs with small children their time to contribute is limited.

Celebrating the membership “levels” (founding members, 5-year member, new), having awards for those sponsoring the most new members, most involved Dame of the year, etc. could create enthusiasm especially at a special awards event.

Promoting your Fundraising Events Break Out Session

Based on the discussion at our table, Becky and I believe that Birmingham seemed to have the best fundraiser. Becky shared details at our table and most were amazed at what we’ve accomplished. We expect to be hearing from other chapters with more questions as to “how” and “what” we do.

The individual groups all seemed to realize that collaborating on a regional level to promote a big event is a positive. The example of Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, and Birmingham was presented.

M.F.K Fisher Awards Presentation

Dame Elain Cicora (Cleveland) was named winner of the M.F.K Fisher Award for Excellence in Culinary Writing for “Me and Chef Boyardee”, Summer 2017 issue of *Edible Cleveland*. Her prize was \$1,000.

General Session

On our third day, Haley Matson-Mathes opened our sessions with a group of hula dancers. Next came a lesson in Hawaiian culture, and it was followed by lots of networking before the other sessions began.

The Evolution of Rosé

Dames Dawn Smith (sommelier, The Inn at Langley) and Katherine

Cole (author, *Rosé All Day*) led this fascinating session. We tasted about five rosé wines that ranged in color from almost clear to orange, lavender, and a traditional pink. The orange wine smelled like a bouquet of roses and tasted like roses too! I learned so much!

Cannabis Cuisine

Before you flip out, let me share that I recorded this session and will share the audio file if you email me.

Conference Bonus

- I must admit that on the second meeting day, opening speaker CiCi Williamson was so funny that I forgot to take notes. We found her suggestion for a product called “Volunteer for Everything Magic Mix” was one we should implement. It is a small bag of herb mix that says “sprinkle on everything”. It’s guaranteed to make you want to volunteer for everything! (Maybe you had to be there...LOL.)
- Seriously, I was skeptical about Lori Masukawa, News Anchor, KING5 Television-Seattle, when she was

introduced as the day 2 keynote speaker. After all, what could a news anchor say to women about food that would contribute to how we should conduct our chapter? Obviously, this was a lesson in listening! But it was worth it. I did not take notes because I was so engaged. This dynamic woman had to overcome some incredible obstacles to become a leading news anchors. Look up her name on YouTube and watch interviews about her rise to fame. It’s worth it.

- Becky and I took an Uber ride to the area near Puget Sound on day 2 and had a nice lunch on the waterfront near the big ferris wheel. It was absolutely beautiful!
- On the evening I attended the First-Time Attendees reception, my team participated in a trivia challenge and WON! We all received one \$40 raffle ticket for the drawing for a trip to Paris! (Spoiler alert: I didn’t win!)

Becky and I hope everyone will make the next conference in Nashville. (Chicago had 16 members at this event.) Let’s shoot for at least 20!

The Chicago chapter had 16 members at this year’s conference in Seattle. Let’s shoot for at least 20 at next year’s conference in Nashville. It’s being held at the Loews Vanderbilt, October 24-27, 2019.



Community Food Bank of Central AL Service Day

By Susan Swagler

On September 19, five Dames went to the Community Food Bank of Central Alabama for a day of service. Sonthe Burge, Mary Esther Carpenter, Idie Hastings, Susan Swagler, and Ashley Tarver met for two hours to sort foods in the Food Bank warehouse.

Since 1982, the Food Bank has been a central clearinghouse for collecting food that might otherwise be wasted. The Food Bank serves 12 counties and works with 240 agencies to distribute food to people in need. Food comes to the Food Bank from farmers, grocery stores and other retailers, distributors, wholesalers and other food-industry sources. In addition, community food drives bring in tons of food (the items collected by the mail carriers during their food drives end up here).

New Dame Kathryn Strickland, executive director of the Community Food Bank, shared a video explaining the importance and immediacy of the organization's work. The visiting Dames learned lots of things including:

- The Community Food Bank, Central Alabama's largest hunger relief organization, distributes some 12 million nutritious meals each year, feeding between 60,000 and 80,000 people each month.
- One in four children (that's over 76,000 children—more than the populations of Homewood, Bessemer and Anniston combined) suffer from hunger and food insecurity in our 12-county community.
- One in six adults are food insecure. Hungry people in our area include working families, seniors, veterans, people with



The Corner Market grocery trailer (above) regularly goes to food-challenged neighborhoods to offer fresh produce, meat, eggs, dairy products, and other healthy foods (right).



- disabilities and multigenerational families.
- More than 1,000 children in 31 schools are served weekly through the Weekenders Backpack program.
 - Ending senior hunger is one of the Food Bank initiatives. Work, done in person and through a free call center, includes doorstep food delivery, special medical screenings and benefits enrollment.
 - Through Rx Health, the Food

Bank partners with healthcare providers. Their work impacts nursing mothers, babies, seniors and people with diabetes and heart failure.

- Mobile pantries and mobile groceries serve people in “food deserts.”
- The organization recovers more than 5 million pounds of food annually, working with grocers and

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Personal Perspective: My Volunteer Days at CFB

By Ashley Tarver

I was excited to visit the Community Food Bank of Cental Alabama in mid-September and meet new Dame, Kathryn Strickland. Fellow Dames Susan Swagler, Idie Hastings, Sonthe Burge, and Mary Esther Carpenter were as enthralled as I was by Kathryn's presentation. In Central Alabama alone, the Community Food Bank (CFB) feeds approximately 12 million individuals. One single dollar is enough to feed 8 people. CFB has also partnered with 100 Alabama grocery stores. Any food that does not meet aesthetic standards (for example misshapen carrots or a dented can) as well as food that has reached its expiration date is donated.

My fellow Dames and I were moved to tears when we heard stories of children sharing a small backpack's worth of food meant to sustain them over the weekend with their entire family. Another heartbreaking story is that of the elderly who don't want to burden their children by telling them they don't have enough to eat. CFB works directly with schools and hospitals to be on the lookout for food unstable. Hospitals even have small meal kits they can give on the spot to anyone who they feel is food unstable.

When it was time to get to work, I was expecting a small warehouse where we'd separate some food. But, no, Kathryn Strickland runs a tight ship and CFB is a well-oiled machine. We entered a massive warehouse where we set about breaking down pallets worth of food. Each

item was placed into food group specific boxes. For example, grains and pasta were store separately from canned vegetables. We examined each item for a best by date and per regulations made sure each label was intact.

When Kathryn mentioned that CFB has a mobile grocery store called The Corner Market that travels to economically distressed neighborhoods, I was fascinated. I immediately wanted to jump on board, literally, and the following week I volunteered.

The Corner Market is a 24 foot air conditioned trailer that has been outfitted to be a one aisle grocery store. It offers fresh produce, lean meats, milk, eggs, yogurt, grains and other healthy foods at affordable prices.

The Corner Market aims to encourage residents to spend their SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) at the Corner Market on healthier foods. When residents do so, they receive a matching amount (up to \$20) of produce vouchers.

The mobile grocery also acts as a platform for additional services such as nutrition education, cooking demonstrations and health screenings. The current route includes Pratt City, Tarrant, West Jefferson, Fountain Heights, and Lincoln.

My time on the mobile grocery was incredibly emotional for me. It also brought much joy. I will admit that until I meet Kathryn and connecting with CFB, I was more aware of global poverty than the needs right here in Alabama. I met the most wonderful people from retired army and air force vets to public

school teachers and cancer survivors. These were all hard-working, good people whose social security or savings didn't stretch quite far enough. I watched as they shared recipes for sweet potato pies and argued over turnip greens vs. collard greens. Two women stood out in particular, the army vet and ovarian cancer survivor, who looked at me and said “None of us are different. We are all the same. There are good people everywhere.” She then gave me the biggest hug. The second woman was a public school teacher in the City of Birmingham for 40 years. She said her whole life she had given to Red Cross and United way and was thankful for CFB. I helped her carry 15 lbs of groceries to her apartment, a quarter mile away, in 95 degree heat. She said since I was going to help her carry it she might as well get the biggest honeydew she could and boy did she!

Community Food Bank can use as many volunteers as possible. One bond we all share as human beings is the love of food. Anywhere in the world you can make a connection with someone over their favorite food or recipe. It's time that we as Dames start connecting in our own back yard. CFB has been incredibly gracious to me and can use as many Dames as possible!

This fall the CFB is conducting a Comprehensive Hunger Study and is in great need of volunteer data collectors. The study will serve to learn more about the challenges of the people served by the food bank. To sign up to volunteer, please contact Kathryn Strickland at kstrickland@feedingal.org.

Annual Chapter Business Meeting Report

By Martha Johnston

The 2018 business meeting of LDEI Birmingham was held on Sunday, August 19, at the Emmet O’Neal Library in Mountain Brook with Becky Satterfield presiding. There were 37 Dames in attendance.

The group elected new officers for the chapter including: Susan Swagler, President; Leigh Sloss-Corra, VP of Membership; and Rachel Q. West, Secretary. They also elected nine women as members of our chapter: Barbara Gaines Kenyon, Andrea Griffith, Rebel Negley, Kate Nicholson, Geri-Martha O’Hara, Rosie Pihakis, Cheryl Slocum, Kathryn Strickland, and Rebecca Williamson.

An increase in dues was approved by the membership making the new fee \$200 annually. LDEI Birmingham chapter bylaws revisions were presented and approved. These bylaw changes reflected the current com-



mittee operation procedures. The following officers, committees and event teams reported on their activities:

- Secretary: Brooke Bell
- Treasurer: Laura Zapalowski
- Membership committee and new members’ reception: Gia McCollister
- Programs: Christiana Roussel
- Southern Soirée: Kathy Mezrano

- Fundraising: Martha Johnston and Idie Hastings
- Fundraiser publicity: Rachel West
- Social media: Ashley McMakin
- Silent auction: Susan Swagler
- Outreach and scholarships: Rosemary Dallam
- Sidewalk Film Festival: Leigh Sloss-Corra
- Book Club: Jan Gautro

Food Bank, continued from page 12

other retailers who donate, rather than throw away, their surplus food.

- For every dollar donated, the Food Bank is able to obtain and distribute eight meals. In fact, \$0.95 of every dollar goes directly to the program.
- The Food Bank is a first responder during disasters like tornados and hurricanes.

The Food Bank works with more than 100 grocery stores in central Alabama to collect, sort and distribute foods that otherwise would be thrown in the trash. After a short lesson led by volunteer coordinator Shalitha McLean on

food safety and what to look for, the Dames went to work and in a single hour they unpacked, inspected and sorted 41 boxes of foods donated by Publix.

Some of the Dames said that now that they have the training, they plan to volunteer at the Food Bank on a regular basis. If you’d like to join them, please email volunteer@feedingAL.org.

Community Food Bank of Central Alabama
107 Walter Davis Drive
Birmingham, Alabama 35209
(205) 942-8911
www.FeedingAL.org



The Food Bank Warehouse is essential to the distribution of 12 million nutritious meals annually.

Dames Favorite Things: Gifts for the Holidays

By Christiana Roussel

Tis the season y’all! Those of us in the food and hospitality industries have, ahem, certain feelings about this time of year, which may range from stress and anxiety to panic and angst. With any luck, all those deadlines will be met and everyone will go home happy, fed, and maybe even with a little gift tucked in their bags. Here are a few your fellow dames are hoping to give—and receive—this holiday season:

Sonthe Burge:
A great salad spinner! I am not a big fan of the spring mix lettuces—no crunch. I like real lettuce like red or green leaf, romaine, arugula, spinach and iceberg. The salad spinner makes washing the lettuce very easy. Oh, and treat yourself to a lettuce knife, too!

Geri-Martha O’Hara:
My favorite gift to give is an Alabama Sawyer cutting board. They source local wood to make their products. They can tell you which street the tree can from exactly! They are absolutely stunning and durable! They also make a great conversation piece to share about the company to your guests. They won *Garden & Gun’s* Southern Maker award for 2017. <https://alasaw.com/collections/kitchen-accessories/products/large-cutting-board-with-handle?-variant=2774262054935>

Carey Thomasson:
Someone recently gifted an awesome apron from Lamb’s Ear in Crestline Village. I also think a bottle of Port is a great gift or some really lovely cheese from The

Pantry. Other good ideas? A hanging basket of flowers for your porch or a copy of the current *New York Times* bestseller.

Jan Gautro:
I love to give chocolates with gold fleur de lis on them from Sucré in New Orleans—their packing is so great and everyone says they taste scrumptious. (I’m allergic to chocolate!) I also love to give fleur de lis-adorned beer glasses and old-fashioned glasses from New Orleans jewelry designer Mignon Faget.

Andrea Griffith:
I would love to get a pasta extruder. I love making fresh pasta with my kids (ages 12, 7, and 4), but you know how impatient kiddos are! If we could make the dough together and watch as it comes out, they would love it!

Mary Esther Carpenter:
I love to both give and receive spa gift certificates from either Ross Bridge or the Poseidon Spa at the Grand Bohemian. You can make a whole day of it!

Andrea Snyder:
Gift certificates for car washing and detailing are the best gifts!

Susan Swagler:
I would love to get and receive some Alabama-themed kitchen towels from Alabama Goods in Homewood. Their forged iron cheese spreaders are nice, too. Another great gift idea are the Tena Payne brie-baking bowls from The Cook’s Store. They are so very pretty. And that’s such an easy appetizer!

Brittany Garrigus:
I’d like to give or receive a cookie recipe attached to either a cookie cutter or, if it’s a jam cookie, a small jar of the jam.

Katherine Cobbs:
Give the gift of an experience that is so much fun! The most fun I’ve had in ages was with a bunch of friends on a Birmingham Pedal Tour. Gather your girlfriends or your extended family and book one these to be the tourist in your hometown! <https://www.birminghampedaltours.com/>

Kate Nicholson:
I have one of these bookmarks and they work great especially when you’re following a recipe in a cookbook where the pages keep turning. Yes, you’ve seen them before, but usually in leather. This rubber one is perfect in the kitchen and it also doubles as a jar opener. <https://www.amazon.com/Book-Bone-ORIGINAL-Weighted-Book-Bones-Printings/dp/B01DMLV926>

Laura Zapalowski:
Some of my favorite gifts to give:

- Kitchen tools and accessories from Food52.com, like ash wood egg boards for my friends with chickens to display their eggs, bud vases to brighten kitchens, and salt and pepper grinders.
- For teachers (and myself) last year I gave bags of frozen cookies from Cookie Fix in Homewood. I love that you can bake just one or two at a time or the whole bag. I keep them in the freezer over the holidays for unexpected guests and a fun dessert during movie night with my kids.

Dames offer advice at BBJ Women's Summit



Ashley McMakin, Becky Satterfield, and Idie Hastings spoke on the Culinary Power Women panel discussion moderated by Wendy Garner at the Birmingham Business Journal's 2018 Women's Summit at The Club.



By Martha Johnston

Three dames—Idie Hastings, Ashley McMakin, and Becky Satterfield—spoke to a sold-out crowd at the *Birmingham Business Journal's* 2018 Women's Summit on Friday, September 21. Their discussion, entitled Culinary Power Women, reached an audience of entrepreneurs, executives, and young professional women who responded with enthusiasm to the panel of accomplished culinary women from LDEI Birmingham.

Idie, Ashley, and Becky shared their insights, career experiences, business philosophies, and management styles with the group. These Dames were asked about their involvement in local nonprofits, including LDEI, and how they each balanced this with their careers. They shared the lessons they've learned from "mistakes" and the most pivotal decision/point in their career. The motivation of employees proved good talking points too.

Becky also talked about the process of starting her new venture, El ZunZún while balancing her existing work. Idie and Ashley both spoke of the opportunities and challenges that come from working with family members in a business. The topic of assessing growth opportunities and strategies was covered by Ashley.

Dames Susan Swagler and Rachel West made time to attend this event and shared information with attendees about our local chapter and Southern Soirée during the information fair.

Bham Dames return for a takeover of Pepper Place

By Leigh Sloss-Corra

For the second year, LDEI's Birmingham chapter teamed up with the Market at Pepper Place in September for a month-long spotlight on women in food. As part of the "Les Dames Market Takeover," the Market's popular weekly chef demonstration was hosted by a different Dame or team of Dames for five consecutive Saturdays. Featured Dames included Pastry Chef Brittany Garrigus (Satterfield's), Chef Sherron Goldstein (Fresh Fields Cooking) with Rebel Negley, Pat Terry (Samford Wellness Kitchens) with Chef Jessica Ivey, a book signing of *Basque Country* by guest author Marti Buckley, Chef Kathy Mezrano (Kathy G. & Co.), and Executive Chef Mary Grace Viado (Village Tavern).

Besides offering instruction, cooking tips, and take-home copies of the recipe, the live cooking demos provided the chefs with an opportunity to share the LDEI mission and promote the upcoming fundraiser, Southern Soirée. Savvy members on the publicity committee ensured that the Les Dames Market Takeover received regular press coverage, including prime placed stories and videos in print, on television, and online, which improved attendance of the demos.

The Market at Pepper Place is a certified Alabama farmers' market, the largest of its kind in the state, with 10,000 visitors attending weekly during peak season. The Market was "very pleased" to partner with LDEI for the month-long focus on women in the food industry and hopes to do more with the Birmingham Dames in the future.



Top: Sherron Goldstein and Rebel Negley teamed up for one of the cooking demonstrations at the Market at Pepper Place. Middle: Chef Mary Grace Viado finished out the month-long LDEI takeover. Left: Pastry Chef Brittany Garrigus made homemade biscuits and pear jam during her demo, which kicked off the takeover.

..... Dames Recommend

The Netherlands

Rebecca Williamson

There's a place called Villa Augustus in the city of Dordrecht in the Netherlands that is absolutely wonderful. This charming hotel is in an old water tower. If you can go in the spring, you will be able to enjoy the country in bloom with tulips! Oh, by the way, this is located in The Windmill region.

Asheville

Susan Swagler

People ask me all the time: "Where should I go to eat?" and "What should I get when I go?" I love sharing what I know, but there's a little pressure involved sometimes.

So I get really excited when someone else makes those kinds of decisions for me. During a recent trip to Asheville, N.C., my friend April McAnnally shared her city with me, and it was a food-focused tour that was absolutely awesome. Here are a few of April's favorite things:

FRIDAY NIGHT

We headed to Gan Shan Station for dinner. Patrick O'Cain was born and raised in North Asheville. He spent time in the kitchens of Asheville's Curate and McCrady's restaurant in Charleston, South Carolina. He left McCrady's and opened Charleston's Xiao Bao Biscuit as sous-chef.

Then he returned home to his own dreams and opened a restaurant in the neighborhood where he grew up. Gan Shan Station is in an old gas station in North Asheville. The open, airy place is named for Sunset Mountain where Patrick spent his childhood.

April arranged for the chef's table tasting menu, and it was a stunning



The charming Villa Augustus in Dordrecht, the Netherlands.

mix of Southern foods and Asian flavors—and clever drink pairings from around the world.

Sichuan salt and pepper tofu (a table favorite even with people who don't like tofu) was paired with a cocktail made of mezcal; whole flounder, sprinkled with fresh flowers and herbs and served over crispy Laotian rice, came with a Tuscan white. A miso-glazed pork chop with pickled blackberries and buttermilk dressing was paired with a French merlot. Six people fell in love with Sichuan pepper that night.

SATURDAY

We started our day at Hole Doughnuts with cooked-to-order, served-hot-y'all doughnuts and great coffee roasted at the nearby PennyCup Coffee Co.

At Hole, the yeasty dough is rolled out by hand, right in front of you. The doughnut varieties change

all the time, but expect them to be glazed, dipped or sprinkled as you watch. Our doughnuts were crisp on the outside, wonderfully fluffy inside with vanilla glaze; a seasonal topping of hand-crushed wineberries; a dusting of cinnamon and sugar; and a crunchy, slightly savory topping of almonds, toasted sesame seeds and cinnamon.

For lunch, April guided us to Chai Pani with its Indian street food by two-time James Beard Foundation nominee for Best Chef Southeast Meherwan Irani.

The self-taught Irani also owns a Chai Pani in Decatur, GA, as well as Botiwalla, a traditional tea and kabab place. He teamed up with Chef Elliott Moss (another James Beard Best Chef Southeast nominee) to open Buxton Hall BBQ in Asheville's South Slope area. Irani also owns MG ROAD Bar & Lounge and a Spicewalla spice store, both located near Asheville's Chai Pani.

During our lunch, we enjoyed butter chicken thali with marinated Joyce Farms chicken; uttapam (savory crepes made of rice and lentil batter) with corn, peas, onion, cilantro, curry leaf, ginger and hot peppers; and (our surprise favorite) crispy masala fish roll with cumin, lime, chili powder, ginger and garlic in hot-buttered naan.

SATURDAY NIGHT

For dinner, we headed to Nightbell for great craft cocktails and shared small plates. Executive chef and owner Katie Button serves dishes made with local Appalachian ingredients in the intriguing setting of a former nightclub (you'll notice the colorful disco lights here and there). Nightbell gets its name from the days when guests rang the "nightbell" for entrance after 5.

Katie was a semi-finalist for the James Beard Foundation Rising Star Chef award in 2012 and 2013 and a nominee in 2014, semi-finalist for Best Chefs in America in 2015 and a nominee for the JBF Best Chef Southeast award in 2018. She was one of Food & Wine magazine's Best New Chefs of 2015, and she hosted an international television series The Best Chefs in the World.

Katie and company source ingredients mostly from small, local farms. A nose-to-tail butchery program, in partnership with her Cúrate, has them serving sustainable (often lesser-known) cuts.

What we loved: the "deviled eggs," which are an airy mix of corn sabayon, sunburst smoked trout gravlax and pimenton in an egg cup (certainly like no other deviled egg we've ever had); brown butter skillet cornbread with chicken butter and seasonal jams; grilled baby beets with bresaola, puffed Carolina gold rice and béarnaise



Above: Chai Pani with its Indian street food by two-time James Beard nominee for Best Chef Southeast Meherwan Irani offers lots of fresh, exotic flavors; local color; and a great bar.

Right: We started our day at Hole Doughnuts with cooked-to-order, served-hot-y'all doughnuts and coffee roasted at the nearby PennyCup Coffee Co.



yogurt; seared scallops with roasted sweet potato, sour corn and dashi; and house-made French fries with rocket sauce.

SUNDAY

Before heading home, we went to Limones for brunch. This cozy, downtown restaurant specializes in Mexican and California cuisine.

We shared a plate of lobster nachos with crema, guacamole and Serrano peppers to start. Other favorite dishes highlighted the inventiveness of this kitchen and included roasted fennel and organic snap pea slaw enchiladas with mole Amarillo, chipotle rice, crema, gua-

camole, queso fresco and pickled onion; huevos divorciados with chipotle rice, bacon, refried beans, queso fresco and avocado; and smoked chipotle chilaquiles with two eggs, epazote, refried beans, crema, queso, pico de gallo and Southern farm bacon.

If you go, begin with the awesome bloody Mary or the Basil Refrescante (Oronoco rum, muddled basil, fresh lemon juice and simple syrup) or a peach-chipotle margarita (Patron Reposado, Patron Citronge, fresh lime juice, and house-made peach-chipotle puree). And end with a cup of anise-scented hot chocolate served with churros.

LDEI Bham hosts Sidewalk film premiere

By Leigh Sloss-Corra

Members of the LDEI Birmingham chapter were front and center at the movie premiere of *Michelin Stars: Tales From the Kitchen*, a gorgeous and fascinating new documentary about the world’s most accomplished chefs, that opened at the 20th Annual Sidewalk Film Festival in Birmingham in August. This is the second year that LDEI’s Birmingham chapter has sponsored a major food-focused film at the popular festival, which attracts approximately 20,000 attendees annually.

LDEI members welcomed festival goers in the lobby of the historic Lyric Theatre with gold-dusted rounds of chocolate cake, prepared by Telia Johnson, and shared information about the organization and its upcoming fundraiser, Southern Soirée. Birmingham Past President Becky Satterfield then introduced the film to a packed house and had a few minutes to talk about how the chapter is supporting women in food and hospitality. Sidewalk organizers thanked the Dames, and are already making plans for ways to partner in 2019.



Above and at right: A group of Dames welcomed film-goers to the Lyric Theatre, passing out Telia Johnson gold-dusted chocolate cake rounds and sharing information about our chapter. Below left and right: Leigh Sloss-Corra and Becky Satterfield introduced the film and shared some details about LDEI Birmingham with attendees. Photos by Jaysen Michael.



Let's Toast

Rachel Q. West, RD, was inducted into the 2018 Mass Communication and Journalism Hall of Fame at the University of Southern Mississippi. Most recently she was a senior editor and brand leader at Oxmoor House, overseeing the Cooking Light publishing list for all of their branded cookbooks and special interest publications. Two of the books she edited won prestigious James Beard awards.



Jennifer Yarbrough, owner of Crestline Bagel Company, Inc., has announced the opening a third location in downtown Birmingham at Innovation Depot in January 2019.



Ashley McMakin, owner of Ashley Mac's Inc., has been named one of 30 Alabama Women Who Shape the State in 2018 by This

is Alabama and *Birmingham* magazine. Honorees are chosen based on their impact on their city/region across all the industries in making Alabama a better place.

Catherine Sloss Jones, president and CEO of Sloss Real Estate, has received the Bell Johnson Lifetime Achievement Award from the Girl Scouts of North-Central Alabama. Jones is also board chair of the Market at Pepper Place.



Bham Dames Book Club Report

By Anne Cain

The LDEI Birmingham Book Club met on August 13, at the home of Dame Jan Gautro and discussed the book *What We Eat When We Eat Alone* by Deborah Madison. Mem-

bers enjoyed sampling each other’s “go-to” foods for solo eating as well as recipes from the book. Attending were Dames Martha Johnston, Anne Cain, Susan Nash Gilpin, Jan Gautro, Rebecca Williamson, and Laura Zapalowski.



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