

THE BOUQUET GARNI

NEWSLETTER OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA CULINARY ARTS SPECIALIST ASSOCIATION



President's Message



To state that the 2020/21 school year has been a long, emotional, and challenging journey would be very conservative. As a group, we have been through some incredible highs and some tough lows but what has stood true is the comradery, determination, and cohesiveness of B.C.'s Chef Instructors. Through all of the challenges, you have successfully taught and inspired your students and at the end of the day, that is our ultimate goal. As we start to wind down and we start to see the sun again, I urge you to take time and focus on your mental health and well-being. Burnout is always a reality in our profession, and this has no doubt be amplified this year. I have enjoyed conversing, reading emails, and scrolling through

social media posts showcasing how some of you choose to detach from the everyday pressures and stresses. These have inspired me to take some time and just enjoy life by simply being outdoors. I hope everyone continues to share and inspire others to take some time for themselves.

There are a couple of items that have been working since the last Bouquet Edition that I wanted to share with you. The first item being an update (or non-update) of the status of our October Conference and AGM. While I wish I could give any decisions from the BCTF, understandably, there is still no word on whether we will be permitted to host an in-person conference in 2021 or not. There are still so many COVID unknowns and variables that would need to be understood in order to make this decision. Many of the larger PSA's have continued with plans to host in-person conferences with the tentative booking of hotels, scheduling of speakers, etc. but I believe that we can hold off on any actual concrete plans until we get the official word. If we do get the go-ahead to host an in-person conference and AGM this coming October, we will simply adapt and adjust as we always do and come up with an incredible experience. If we need to go virtual one more time, we will do the same.

I have also had the opportunity to engage in great conversations with contacts at the Ministry of Education about returning Culinary Arts' multiple provincial course codes to our current curriculum. I hope that we will see nine codes for Culinary Arts courses and seven codes for Pastry/Baking courses. During the early part of this process, it was suggested that this should a "done deal" by September. Recently, a disappointing email stated that COVID slowdowns may cause these new course codes to take some more time resulting in them not be ready for the fall. Although they will come later, we continue to have full support and understanding from both the Ministry of Education and the BCTF. Both groups have acknowledged

the importance of these provincial codes to provide our students with a wide selection of courses needed to broaden their educational experiences as they prepare for industry and post-secondary education.

As always, the BCASA Executive and I will do our best to keep you up to date as information comes our way. Keep up all of the incredible work that you are doing, it continues to make a difference!!

Trevor Randle

From Donna Frost & Scott Roberts:

We take care of membership duties and we also work on side projects. It has been a strange year, hopefully most of you have been able to maintain some level of daily cooking for your schools or classrooms.

Just a reminder, we have the BCCASA Google share site. Lots of members have uploaded great resources over the past.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1DdQ4PRw5bSFTObCqXOVYwLn_2bWZd8ze?usp=sharing

Additional teaching resources can be found at Youth explore trades tools for teaching.

<https://mytrainingbc.ca/youthexploreskills/>

If you have trouble logging on, please email scott.roberts@abbyschools.ca

As always, check out the BCCASA's website for contact information of executive and other information. And as always if you move or change schools/districts to let us know and the BCTF to update their membership information.

<http://bccasa.ca/>

A Note from the Editor:

It's the dawn of a new era for the restaurant and hospitality industry. I've spent the last few weeks trying to recruit prospective students for my Youth Train in Trades Culinary program for next year. Part of that discussion has centered around the current state of the industry, and this has left me hopeful.

Sure things are dark now, closed dining rooms, staff laid off or fired, and many establishments closed, but a renaissance is coming. I've told my current students, that by next summer with flights and tourism back in action, hotels and restaurants will be dying to find enough workers. This will inevitably lead to better pay and better working conditions, in addition to a change of culture that was long overdue for most professional kitchens. With the United States a few steps ahead of us in the vaccine front, I'm already beginning to hear whispers of this on social media. Restaurants in NYC offering \$25 an hour for line cooking, staff being offered medical, dental, and 2 weeks paid vacation at resorts in Hawaii.

It seems that this business that I've spent most of life immersed in is finally being forced to grow up and is treating its valued staff with the respect they deserve.

Keep your knives sharp,
Stephen Schram
BCCulinaryArtsSpecialists@gmail.com



Do You Even GRAM?

Instagram isn't just for the kids we teach; it can be a powerful tool for chef teachers to communicate, promote, and create a buzz about our classrooms and the food that our students create. If you don't have an account, setting up one is easy, and if you do, check out these inspiring teachers!

@newwestcafe

A team of instructors and students creating culinary art for NWSS

Check out what the Chef David Johnson and the team at N-dub are up to. Many menus and lots of creative cooking here! They've just recently moved into their sparkling brand new kitchen at the new school. Take note of lead Chef Lance Bourne's experiments with pickling and dehydration.



@vantech_cafeteria

Van Tech Culinary Arts Program

A fun and stress-free class that teaches students employable culinary skills. Culinary Arts is an elective offered to VT students in gr. 10/11/12

Live from Vancouver it's the creative team at Vancouver Technical Culinary Arts, led by instructor Adeline Wong. They've had to be creative with mandated limited food service in the VSB. Check out some of the amazing baked goods they've pumped out this year.

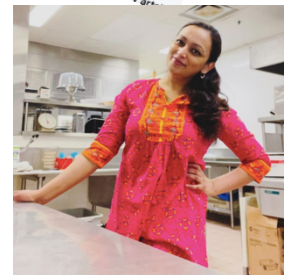


@sasculinaryarts

We are high school culinary students who create fresh food & enjoy serving our community.

"No one is born a great cook, one learns by doing" - J.C

Straight outta Salmon Arm, Chef Nimmi Erasmus went back to her former high school to create and open a brand new culinary arts program in the Shushwap. Some real creativity and exciting stuff is happening!



WHAT'S GOING ON

...around British Columbia

The Spot Prawn Festival is back for 2021!

The Chefs' Table Society of BC (CTS) and Pacific Prawn Fishermen's Association (PPFA) are excited to announce that the much-loved annual [Spot Prawn Festival](#) is returning for 2021. The festival will be a "deconstructed", COVID-19 friendly, celebration of the local, sustainable, and delicious humble BC spot prawn. When the season opens on May 14, 2021 the festival will immediately begin and continue for the duration of the season which is 6-8 weeks. Each year the commercial season is scheduled around the complex life cycle of the species for sustainability of the fishery.



Spot Prawn Festival goes virtual, for the entirety of the season, with chefs across BC and Canada showcasing the versatility and ease of this easily identifiable BC delicacy that is prized for their sweet delicate flavour and firm

texture. By following CTS social media accounts, foodies across BC and beyond will be connected to spot prawn loving chefs. Followers will learn how to identify spot prawns, how to cook spot prawns, where to purchase, and the sustainability of the fishery so generations are able to enjoy this special treat for years to come. Funds raised will go towards CTS initiatives such as culinary scholarships and the legacy project CTS Culinary Library.

The main Spot Prawn Festival event will be held virtually on Saturday, May 29, 2021. Spot prawn lovers will be able to cook their own three-course dinner with BC spot prawns as the star. Tutorials will be guided by

CTS chef members from three BC regions and include Chefs Angus An of Maenam in Vancouver, Ned Bell and Stacy Johnston of Naramata Inn in the Okanagan and Ken Nakano of Aura Waterfront Restaurant + Patio located at Inn at Laurel Point in Victoria, as well as special guest and Order of Canada recipient Chef Robert Clark. Tickets for the online event are \$25 and available on Eventbrite.



While this is a detour from the typical in-person festival at Fisherman's Wharf, it will be no less interactive and CTS's initiatives of celebrating the BC



spot prawn season will be further reaching. The virtual Spot Prawn Festival encourages seafood lovers to make the best of the spot prawn season in the safety of their own homes.

Celebrate World Milk Day with a Free Virtual Cook-Along

On June 1, 2021, dairy lovers around the world will join together for World Milk Day! British Columbia residents are invited to celebrate all things dairy with [a free a cook-along event](#) from 5:30pm to 7:00pm on June 1! This event, presented by Mainland Milk Producers Association, is part of a series of virtual cook-along classes hosted by BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation (BCAITC) and We Heart Local BC.

The webinar will feature a fun cooking lesson with Chef Trevor Randle. Chef Randle will provide expert instruction as he guides participants through a tasty, budget-friendly, BC grown menu featuring milk, cream, and cheese-based dishes:

- BC Beef Fajitas with Queso (vegetarian option also available)
- BC Tres Leches Cake



Fraser Valley dairy farmers, Grant and Amanda Bouwman from Mardelen Holsteins Ltd., will join Chef Randle online to cook from their own kitchen and share their personal farming experiences. Plus, webinar participants will be entered into prize

draws for a chance to win dairy gift certificates and other prizes totalling \$3,000!

Mark Van Klei, President of Mainland Milk Producers Association, said, “We encourage everybody to celebrate local dairy products on June 1 - World Milk Day. By attending this cook-along event, you can learn new recipes and discover the important contributions of the Fraser Valley dairy farmers to sustainability, economic development, livelihoods, and nutrition.”



Chef Randle commented, “People of all ages and of all cooking skills are invited to join together and take part in this amazing cooking, education, and eating experience. During the pandemic, it’s a fun way to spend an evening learning about BC grown foods in a safe online environment.”

To register for this free cook-along event and find the recipes and menu shopping/equipment list, please visit <https://www.bcaitc.ca/blog/cook-along-chef-randle-june-1>. Space is limited, so register today.

Share on social media: #CookAlongBC #WorldMilkDay #EnjoyDairy

For more information, contact:

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What am I?

#49 Spring 2021 by Daniel Lesnes

Although I am generally associated with Thailand and south-east Asia, I have been absorbed into cooking around the world. I am perennial and tropical. I have gray-green leaves and a scallion-like base. Citral gives me most of my flavour and fragrance, but some describe my taste as sweet and sour. In the kitchen my base is my most prominent part.

I can be fresh, dried or powdered, or used as a basting brush. Other than Thai cooking, the world has now recognized me as great

with fish and light meat dishes. I can be infused with milk for custards, puddings and souffle's. Also great for teas, soups, curries, or bunched like a bouquet garni.

If you want to use me fresh, avoid to purchase me when my stalks are loose and coming apart as well as my stalks are brown and crusty or crumbling. These signs means I am now old and probably lost most of my fragrance and nutrition. Unlike most wines, I am not getting better as I am getting older



Our annual FINANCIAL REPORT for your consideration

5/14/2021

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BCTF
Program Expense Report
For The Month Ending April 30,2021

		MTD Actual	YTD Total	2019-20 Budget	% Used
Y750	BC Culinary Arts Specialist Association				
903000	PSA Conference surplus - outside	-	(2,667.70)	-	-
904000	PSA Revenues				
	9930 Membership/Subscription Fees	-	(2,742.00)	-	-
	9931 Grant from BCTF	-	(6,000.00)	-	-
	9934 Interest	(33.40)	(255.65)	-	-
	9939 Other Income	-	-	-	-
905000	PSA Professional Learning/Conference				
	9940 Fees	-	(59.00)	-	-
	9941 Grants	-	(2,500.00)	-	-
906000	PSA Meetings				
	9950 Executive PSA	-	807.50	-	-
907000	PSA Publications				
	9960 Journal	-	65.08	-	-
908000	PSA Expenses				
	9970 Operating Expenses	-	111.98	-	-
	9971 Furniture / Equipment purchase	-	71.53	-	-
	9974 Curriculum development	-	150.00	-	-
		MTD Actual	YTD Total	2019-20 Budget	% Used
Y750	BC Culinary Arts Specialist Association				
	9979 Miscellaneous Expenses	-	280.39	-	-
909000	PSA Conference				
	9980 Conference Operating	-	5,008.74	-	-
	9988 Speakers	-	447.50	-	-
	Total for Program Y750	(33.40)	(7,281.63)	-	-
901000	Beginning PSA Surplus				
	9921 PSA Income Surplus	-	(20,791.40)	-	-
	YTD PSA Surplus		(7,281.63)		
	Ending PSA Surplus		(28,073.03)		

NOTES FROM THE BACK OF HOUSE

...great thoughts on what we do

COVID-19: Metro Vancouver hospitality's front line still slammed by pandemic
by Derrick Penner
May 4, 2021

Even with patios and the popularity of takeout, unemployment remains high in the restaurant sector as pandemic drags on

"Because when, you know, things go sour, people still want to eat and drink," said Mah, who usually tends bar at the Fairmont Pacific Rim Hotel. "But I wasn't expecting a pandemic. That was the one thing I wasn't predicting."

Over the last 13 months, it has been a roller coaster for Mah — from a high of business being the best he had seen just before COVID-19, to the low of a three-month lockdown last spring with the fear and uncertainty that came along with it.

"(Then) I'm only working three shifts a week, you're not knowing what's going on, and you're always worried in the back of your mind that you're going to get shut down again," Mah said.

Restaurants and bars have been slower to recover from last year's pandemic-related shutdown than other sectors of the economy as venues adjusted to restrictions designed to limit direct contact between people.

Limited seating capacities and shorter operating hours require less staff and leave fewer shifts available for servers and bartenders.

Mah was starting to breathe a little bit easier as this spring rolled around, along with many others in the hospitality sector, as locals starting to fill hotel rooms on "staycations," replacing still-absent tourists, and business became more consistent for restaurants now familiar with COVID-safe operations at limited capacity.

But as COVID infections hit another alarming increase in March, the rollercoaster tipped into another dip with Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry's "circuit-breaker" restrictions on indoor dining. That meant another layoff for Mah.

"It's been very tough, not only emotionally and psychologically, but it has hit financially big time. And now we're shut down again," said Mah, who, besides being a bartender and sommelier, also writes for the online outlet Scout Magazine and co-hosts the podcast Track and Food.

Industry insiders estimate that employment in restaurants and bars was down by about 30 per cent before the Dr. Henry's March 29 "circuit-breaker," said Ian Tostenson, CEO of the B.C. Restaurant and Food Services

Association, which represents about 60,000 workers.

"It could be another 10,000 people higher than that, just because in-store dining has been shut," he added.

Federal programs, such as rent and wage-subsidy programs, have helped restaurateurs, but the uncertainty over restrictions in health orders has been challenging to deal with.

Tostenson said estimates that maybe 4,500 of B.C.'s 15,000 restaurants might be at risk, based on surveys of other business groups, but it is difficult to tell how much of a toll the COVID-19 dent in business is taking on the sector.

"You don't know when it's a closure with the intention of coming back, a closure because I've gone broke, or closure because I'm bankrupt," Tostenson said. "You can just see a lot of businesses that aren't operating (right now)."

"And then the staff, who are everything to a restaurant, probably more important than the food, it's just horrible," Tostenson said.

Mah was fortunate to have "a good amount of savings," along with the government supports and his journalistic sidelines to tide him over, "but definitely, financially, it's been a big hit."

“I know quite a few who are just scraping by, using their credit cards (or) leaning on family and friends,” Mah said.

The administrators of a modest relief fund for industry workers saw a noticeable increase in calls for help within a day or two of the last “circuit-breaker” announcement, said Abdallah El Chami, co-owner of the Main Street Middle Eastern takeout place Superbaba.

“It’s not something that we thought we would do long-term,” El Chami said of the fund, started by an informal industry group organized around the messaging app Slack under the name Vancouver Food and Beverage Community.

They formed the relief fund, which has raised about \$120,000 from donors and larger suppliers, before the Canada Emergency Relief Benefit and other emergency supports were put in place. It now pays out grants of \$150 to \$500 to help the laid-off or unemployed with groceries or small bills such as medical expenses not covered by Medicare.

“Applications were silent for a long time, and then the restriction happened, everyone got laid off, and all of a sudden the emails started flooding in,” El Chami said.

He guesses that some applicants were being more proactive this time around, after the experience of the initial shutdown, which offered better insight into the timelines for Employment Insurance.

“Most of them were more realistic,” he said about the “circuit-breaker,” which Henry announced as a three-week closure but has since been extended to May 25.

“It’s odd to think now that people are sort of professionals in how EI works,” El Chami said, “Before, you never really looked into it until you absolutely needed it.

“Now, everybody can tell you how to apply and what the timeline is. So, unfortunately, they’re experts in something you don’t want to be an expert in.”

Superbaba has been less vulnerable to restrictions because it is mainly takeout, El Chami said, but not free from the anxieties that go along with a deadly virus circulating.

“The day after the restrictions, even my own employees immediately were asking questions, a lot to do with, ‘How can we keep customers further away from us,’ in the interactions,” El Chami said.

In Squamish, the “circuit-breaker” delivered an additional challenge to Cork and Craft Taphouse, which opened last August and doesn’t qualify for key federal supports such as rent and wage subsidies.

The proprietors took over the restaurant’s lease “literally a month before COVID,” said co-owner Cami Tedder. “We’ve had to pivot on the fly ... basically from the moment of opening our doors.”

After the March 29 restrictions, Tedder said Cork and Craft “pivoted in 48 hours,” to get a temporary

outdoor patio set up, with the help of a cooperative landlord.

Still, they have been operating mainly with their venue’s four salaried staff, with few hours to offer 10 other employees, including Tedder, who has been waiting tables and cleaning washrooms.

“We’re just borrowing money to make it through and to be able to pay our staff and keep things going,” Tedder said.

For many others, the pandemic has become a departure point from the industry, which worries those expecting a post-COVID boom in hospitality as people return to more ordinary habits.

Don Falconer, formerly general manager for food and beverage at The Hotel Belmont in downtown Vancouver, departed that job at the end of February to become a consultant for a firm that designs training programs.

“I felt lucky,” said Falconer.

He had just passed his one-year anniversary at Hotel Belmont when the pandemic hit, and as much as the property’s ownership group had done its best to look after its management team, it felt like “the writing was on the wall.”

“As another opportunity came up for me, I had to at least take a serious look at it, because it didn’t feel like there was any security in the hospitality industry anymore,” Falconer said.

From the outside now looking back, Falconer senses a lot of frustration within the industry, “with the lack of assistance that’s being given, with the lack of any sort of cohesive or communicated plan from the powers that be on what it’s going to take to just open for business.”

In early April, B.C.’s Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation Minister Ravi Kahlon set aside \$50 million in a relief fund for businesses hurt by the “circuit-breaker” restrictions, which was expanded to \$125 million on April 26.

According to an unattributed background note from ministry staff, 6,250 hospitality businesses had submitted applications for help out of 7,500 total requests as of April 26, representing about \$70 million.

Falconer, however, was disappointed that there wasn’t more of an effort in provincial plans to put more money directly into the hands of unemployed workers.

“I think that a lot of people who had hospitality as their primary source of income prior to March 2020, and even throughout the last year-and-

a-half, have had to look at other opportunities now,” Falconer said. “And a lot of them have taken on other opportunities that offer a little more security.”

Mah echoed Falconer’s sentiments about the industry needing to see a path forward, such as clear markers for what levels of COVID infections or hospitalizations B.C. needs to get down to, “so we can kind of have an idea when we’re going to reopen.”

From his podcast, and writing for Scout, Mah said he has gotten a sense of how many people have been leaving the industry with no plans to come back.

“I think when this is over, there’s going to be a big shortage of hospitality workers,” he said.

If there is a bright side, Tostenson said, the pandemic has taught restaurants to be more resilient.

Takeout service, once an afterthought for most restaurants, has become 35 to 40 per cent of the industry and will stay that way, Tostenson said, “because people know it works.”

They have also become more technologically adept with online ordering and QR codes on tables that link to webpages in place of printed menus.

“What you’re going to see now is a business that is going to be perhaps more bulletproof for the future,” Tostenson said.

Along with that, however, the industry will have to find ways of providing better security for its employees.

“It’s going to probably take (creating) more of a long-term relationship with an employee not too dissimilar with what’s happened in Europe,” Tostenson said, “where we’re going to create careers and places for people to work.”

That would include more salaried positions, payment of benefits, and restaurant prices would likely have to rise.

“But then we’ll be able to provide a more stable environment,” he said.

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Response to an article?
Recipes?
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LET US KNOW!

Please send any
communication to
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It is important that we keep
BCCASA current,
sharing the ideas and voices of
Chef Instructors throughout BC!

THE ANSWER TO “WHAT AM I?”

...LEMONGRASS!