

A Taste of the Cake™

Volume Eighteen

Fall 2006

We've Been Branded!

By Howard Gordon-Senior Vice President

Branding The Cheesecake Factory® name is an important way to get the word out to our guests and investors—and we do that better than

anyone! These past two years, we've gotten more mileage out of branding than ever before. The best ways to promote our image, concepts and values are simple but effective. The Company generates buzz through word of mouth, awards we've received, published articles, interviews and features on television and, of course, through our new menu design and new menu selections.

Thanks to our impressive staff and loyal guests, we've already won 12 awards in 2006. These include Best Dessert, Best Menu and Best Restaurant to name a few. These awards are mostly a result of readers' polls, which are the ones that really count! The Company

also received this year's Choice in Chains Platinum Award from *Restaurants & Institutions* magazine, which is the only award in our industry voted on by our guests. Two of this year's major awards were bestowed upon our Founder and CEO **David Overton**. David's Hall of Fame induction into MenuMasters from *Nation's Restaurant News* is a great honor, and so is the fact that he was named one of the Best CEO's in America in the restaurant industry by *Institutional Investor* magazine.

We're also mentioned in numerous magazines, newspapers and television broadcasts roughly 150 times per month! Our VP of Performance Development **Chuck Wensing** and his team were the cover story of the April 24 issue of *Workforce Management* magazine. The story highlighted our training practices and talent development. Chef **Bob Okura**, David Overton and I had our photos, along with articles, in national publications such as *Newsweek*, *Forbes*, *BusinessWeek* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

Our top magazine article this year however, was *TIME* magazine's feature on our Culinary R&D Center. It follows how we develop a recipe from inception through the cooking process to when it is presented to the guest. At first, the article was only going to be a few paragraphs. However, a tour of and a few tastings in the Culinary Center helped turn it into a three-page photo spread feature.

And let's not forget television. We were previously showcased on the Food Network's "Into the Fire" series last year. It recently

aired again and was the number one program of all the companies featured in this series. We've also been mentioned on most major TV news programs, including CNBC, and featured on shows like "The Biggest Loser," "Romantic Restaurants," "Yes Dear" and on Lifetime Television. Our Marina del Rey restaurant recently became the TV set for an episode of "Studio 60," a new NBC series, which began airing this fall. And, I am currently working on a story for ABC's "World News Tonight."

How about our new menu? As you know, this year's menu change recently rolled out to all of our restaurants and was the most extensive menu change to date. Along with its fresh look, new menu cover and page layout, we're featuring 16 new menu selections, eight newly designed drinks and five new desserts. These exciting changes have sparked the media's interest and have resulted in more than 15 local and national TV, radio and newspaper interviews.

Since we are a leader in our industry, the spotlight is constantly on us. All of this branding has been made possible through everyone's hard work and for that I thank you! With your ongoing commitment and hard work, The Cheesecake Factory and Grand Lux Cafe restaurants will continue to be the destination of choice for our guests for many more years to come!

Chuck Wensing-VP, Performance Development, as featured recently on the cover of Workforce Management magazine.



Selected Slices

**East Coast Bakery Opens
The Cashew Man
FORE! ... A Good Cause**

Coast To Coast Cheesecake

By Lauren Godfrey and Keith Carango-Senior Vice President, Bakery Operations

Thanks to the hard work of The Cheesecake Factory Bakery team, the locals of Rocky Mount, N.C. are now waking up each morning to the luscious aroma of freshly baked cheesecakes. The official grand opening of our new, East Coast 104,000-square-foot Rocky Mount Bakery and Distribution Center took place July 18 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by Cheesecake Factory executives **David Overton**, **Max Byfuglin**, **Keith Carango**, **Howard Gordon** and local dignitaries including, **Claude Mayo-Nash County Chairman** and **Fred Turnage-Mayor of Rocky Mount**.

And there's no better way to cap off a celebration than with cheesecake and gifts! All who attended the ceremony were served generous, fresh portions of the Rocky Mount production facility's own Original Cheesecake. Guests were also treated to logo pins, hats and stuffed bears to commemorate the occasion.

The state-of-the-art facility opened its arms to the community by also providing guided tours that showcased its high-tech equipment, which will annually produce a whopping 20 million cakes. With the first of three phases complete, the Rocky Mount team is now producing approximately 6,000 Original Cheesecakes per day. Phases two and three, which include equipment installation and securing two additional manufacturing lines, as well as training to produce more complex cakes, will be completed throughout the coming years.

In order to achieve our high-performance goal of "dedication to maximum levels of performance and productivity," The Cheesecake Factory Bakery Incorporated has committed itself to utilizing the full capabilities of this incredible, new facility by providing quality through world-class creative product design and by being a food safety leader. Senior VP of Bakery Operations **Keith Carango** summed up the vision and promise of the day's events, "The Rocky Mount Bakery and Distribution Center represents a step function improvement in our supply chain infrastructure. It is a strategically located, real world-class facility, staffed with wonderful people. Our business is positioned with the capability to produce market-winning quality and the capacity to support our growth plans. Many people can call this project their own: David and Max, the state of North Carolina, Nash County, the city of Rocky Mount, our design and development folks, our equipment and materials partners, the Bakery division and Calabasas Bakery teams and the fantastic people who have become the Rocky Mount Bakery team. This is a proud and important day for all of us!"

Rocky Mount Fascinating Fun Facts

- Up to 100 million pounds of materials annually will be used in manufacturing including:
 - 43 million eggs
 - 14 million pounds of cream cheese
 - 3 million pounds of sour cream
 - 2.2 million pounds of chocolate
- At full capacity, the warehouse can store approximately 200,000 pallets
- With all three shifts running at full capacity, Rocky Mount Bakery will produce enough cakes—when laid end to end—to stretch around the world!



Rocky Mount, N.C. production facility ribbon-cutting ceremony.

(Left to right):
Front row: **David Overton-CCF CEO**, **Fred Turnage-Rocky Mount Mayor**,
Claude Mayo-Nash County Chairman, **Max Byfuglin-President CCFBI**.
Second row: **Russell Proctor-Rocky Mount Chamber of Commerce Chairman**,
Tom Betts-former Carolinas Gateway Partnership Chairman, **Frank Harrison-current Carolinas Gateway Partnership Chairman**, **Gene Byrd-N.C. Department of Commerce Director**, **Business Retention & Expansion**, **Howard Gordon-CCF Sr. VP**, **Bill Daughtridge-N.C. Representative**.

Photo by Andy Ryan Photography

Family Matters

By Joanne Balderas and Mike Balderas-Brentwood GM

My name is Joanne Balderas, and my husband, Mike, is General Manager of the Brentwood Cheesecake Factory. I have a story to share with you about my family and The Cheesecake Factory.

In April we had a serious house fire. Because of some electrical issues, our daughter's bedroom caught fire during the night. By the time Michael and I woke up to a smoke-filled bedroom, we had just enough time to hurry the kids out of the house. Barefoot and dazed, but safe, all we could do was watch in bewilderment as the firefighters worked for hours to put the fire out.

At 4:00 a.m., we were allowed back into the part of the house that hadn't burned and were able to grab some shoes and sweatshirts. No spring break trip to Disneyland for us after all.

We soon began to call family, friends and work associates. Some thought my husband was joking; and if you know him, you can understand that! Our daughter's bedroom was completely burned and parts of our house and belongings were smoke damaged and unsalvageable. We are so thankful to be alive.

In the midst of sorting everything out, the calls started pouring in. Mike was speechless when his ADO,

Heather Berry, called and offered encouraging words. When he spoke to his fellow managers, they assured him they'd take care of everything.

His closest friends at The Cheesecake Factory have taken up collections or have bought things for our kids.

Individuals throughout The Cheesecake Factory family have written encouraging notes, offered prayers, called and really buoyed our spirits. Heather and the corporate office have also been understanding and generous. Staff members have sent checks or

cash in vacation days. We feel so grateful to be surrounded by a group of such caring and generous people.

My husband and I have always known The Cheesecake Factory is a great company to be a part of, but after going through this we are reminded that it's more than a company. It's a family. We are amazed by all of the incredible individuals who have given so generously from their hearts.

Thank you for reminding us how blessed we are to be a part of this amazing family called The Cheesecake Factory!



Brentwood GM Mike Balderas, his wife, Joanne, and children Christian, Delaney, Olivia and Ethan say thank you.

The Cashew Man

By Lauren Godfrey-Projects and Communication Specialist

Sure, there are dedicated guests; but none can compare to a guest at the Sherman Oaks Cheesecake Factory who has become affectionately known as "The Cashew Man." Not only is Dan Moran a regular, dedicated and committed guest but he's also an avid, enthusiastic fan of our Spicy Cashew Chicken entrée.

This menu favorite has shown up on Dan's bill enough times that he actually started keeping record two years ago. Luckily, he uses a credit card that records not only all of his transactions but also detailed records of those transactions. A few years ago, Dan took notice of the number of times he ate at The Cheesecake Factory and then broke it down to the specific items. He soon realized he had consumed 250 Cashew Chicken entrees. Now he keeps track. As of Sept. 7 his tally was at 311 and counting!

When asked why the Cashew Chicken, Dan explained, "I simply had it one time and loved the flavor. I've had it at many other restaurants and it's nothing like The Cheesecake Factory's." With the help of the kitchen operations staff, we were able to put together some approximate calculations as to how much, by ingredient, The Cashew Man has eaten. The results are astounding: This devotee has devoured 233 pounds of rice, 12 pounds of garlic, 165 pounds of chicken and 12,440 cashews! He has ordered this item almost every time during the last two years until about six months ago when he started eating our Thai Lettuce Wraps in order "to try something new and because I thought I should eat more salad."

Dan, who's the Director of Franchising for the Mexican restaurant chain Pollo Campero, travels and eats out a lot, usually at The Cheesecake Factory. He's been a loyal guest since the late '80s, and he was at the openings of The Grove, Sherman Oaks and Thousand Oaks. He and his wife were regulars in Woodland Hills before moving to Santa Clarita (where they hope to see a new restaurant open someday) and they have now been visiting the Sherman Oaks location weekly since it opened September 2001.

When the couple lived near Thousand Oaks, his wife, Lenell, was a server at a local restaurant, Bodega Bay, where she used to wait on our very own **David Overton** and his mother, **Evelyn**. Since Dan and his wife are both involved in the foodservice industry they'd like to stress that they believe in tipping well, especially when they receive excellent service like they do when dining at The Cheesecake Factory.



Dan Moran, "The Cashew Man," with one of his favorite servers, Emilee Momeny, at the Sherman Oaks CCF.

Old Orchard Scores A Perfect 10

By Michael Lee-GM



Keeping a restaurant in “like new” condition, and pleasing our regular, returning guests is a high priority! For The Cheesecake Factory in Old Orchard, these objectives have been on their menu for 10 years! In recognition of Old Orchard’s 10 year anniversary on June 8, staff members were treated to a “house made” breakfast by EKM Ryan Sneed and his team. Eight original staff members, who have been there since its opening 10 years ago, were recognized for their hard work and dedication. They include: Bartender Jo Ann Then; Busser Roberto Castrejon; Prep Cooks Manuel Alvarez and Josue Arteaga; Line Cooks Alberto Bandera and Daniel Rodriguez; Steward Ramses Dorado; and Kitchen Manager Juan Carlos Ruiz. These staff members are a true testament to our value: people—our greatest resource!

Fore! ... A Good Cause

By Lauren Godfrey and Sherry O'Neill-Charitable and Corporate Events Manager



Vendors, executives and countless staff volunteers and friends were all a part of the recent record-breaking fund raising effort on behalf of The Cheesecake Factory Oscar and Evelyn Overton Charitable Foundation Fourth Annual Invitational Charity Golf Tournament. The kindness of those who donated generously of their time, gifts and funds at this year’s charity golf tournament and auction benefited the City of Hope with a whopping \$280,000 and our own foundation in the amount of \$150,000!

The golf tournament, which sold out of golfing spots in just 10 days, was held June 26 at the North Ranch Country Club in Westlake Village, Calif. This shotgun, best ball tournament has become such an enjoyable and popular event that more than 60 people ended up on the waiting list. This year’s winning team was hosted by the Beverage and Bakery Operations department and included representatives from Highland Baking and Natural (Juice) Brands with a final score of 15 under par.

Retired Lakers forward James Worthy scored huge points with three live auction bidders who spent \$10,000 each for box seats at a 2007 Lakers game and the privilege of joining him for the game, dinner and a behind-the-scenes tour of the Staples Center in Los Angeles. In keeping with tradition, the Culinary R&D team’s magnificent “Chef’s Table” dinner was the highlight of the evening and was auctioned off to three different, very fortunate winners at \$20,000 each.

Since the inception of the annual golf and auction event, total net proceeds of more than \$732,000 have been raised and donated to the City of Hope. This charitable organization, a regular benefactor of the Overton Foundation, is an innovative biomedical research, treatment and educational institution dedicated to the prevention and cure of cancer and other life-threatening diseases. With the continued generosity of our big-hearted vendors and fun-loving volunteers, the foundation should be on par to reach its goal of raising \$1 million for the City of Hope.

Just half of a club’s length away from winning a brand new 2006 Lincoln Luxury four-door Zephyr by sinking a hole-in-one is G.B. Mannisto, Inc. Project Manager Duane Ottum! Here he birdies the third hole at the CCF Charity Golf Tournament. Rounding out the foursome are (left to right): Gary Mannisto-President, G.B. Mannisto, Chris Triefenbach-CAD Draftsman and John Burdick-Project Coordinator from the CCF Development department.

Celebrating Silver

By Connie Todd-GM Beverly Hills and Lauren Godfrey

Two thousand six marks the first year that several devoted staff members are celebrating 25 years with The Cheesecake Factory. As these gentlemen recount their memories of when the Company was just starting out, we're reminded that the true meaning of "Quality in Everything We Do," was embodied in the founders of the Company and lives on through the work of these dedicated individuals today.

Rafael Barrientos started working in production at the bakery and then decided to mix it up; from crumb spinning, to mixing, to working with the ovens, to shipping and receiving, to driver and now a maintenance mechanic.

Rafael used to make deliveries to local restaurants in the days before we expanded nationwide and started using FedEx. He appreciated **Evelyn Overton's** hands-on training and remembers when **Renee Overton** "used to check each cake individually when she worked in shipping and receiving."

Lazaro "Barto" Mazas has worked in the bakery production facility for 27 years and began his career making chocolate moons. He later became the head wedding cake decorator during the days when the bakery was small enough to cater to a more local, specialized market. His favorite part of the job is the creative aspect, such as placing rosettes on the cakes by hand. Barto has fond memories of Evelyn Overton keeping a watchful eye on all aspects of cake production and remembers her as "a very friendly and nice lady who spent a lot of time with us in the bakery."

Jose "Spooky" Perez grew up in Oaxaca, Mexico but has been living in Los Angeles for 31 years. He's a "rock solid" busser at the **Beverly Hills Cheesecake Factory**. When asked why he has stayed with The Cheesecake Factory for 25 years, Spooky credits his great, flexible schedule. The flexibility has allowed him to play piano and sing in a Latin band for the past 14 years, as well as take care of his children when they were in school.

Jose Luis "Pepe" Robles came from Oaxaca, Mexico to Los Angeles and began his career 27 years ago as a busboy at the **Beverly Hills Cheesecake Factory**. What does he miss most about the old days? "Everything—some days

I was a busboy, sometimes a prep cook and other days I was a cook. It was all really a lot of fun." Pepe really enjoys the high volume of the Beverly Hills location. He finds working there exhilarating and plans to stay for quite some time. In his free time, Pepe loves going to Dodger Stadium with his kids.

Our honorees each received an engraved silver cake server and a cash gift to mark this special occasion.



Bakery Payroll Administrator Rita Calhoun congratulates Barto Mazas and Rafael Barrientos from the Calabasas Bakery facility.

For Your Benefit

By Amy Tyrrell-Benefits Director

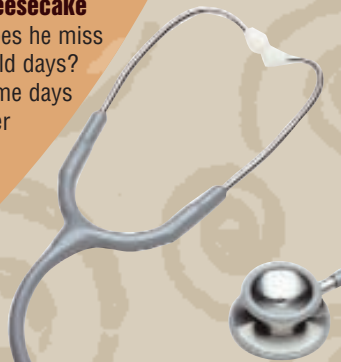
The Cheesecake Factory is proud to be a leader in the hospitality industry that offers a comprehensive benefit program to all eligible staff members. Many have already taken advantage of a wide array of benefit plans by electing coverage that could include: vision services, long term disability, medical and dental insurance. If you did not originally elect coverage when you were first eligible, we have great news: The Cheesecake Factory and Grand Lux Cafe are pleased to present its staff members with an opportunity to enroll in our various benefit plans available through our annual "Open Enrollment" event. So why is Open Enrollment important to you and how can the Benefits department assist you in being safe, secure and healthy?

Now is your chance to learn how! During Open Enrollment you can begin or end coverage and make changes to the plans you have previously selected. You also have the option to enroll in the benefit plans you were eligible for during your initial eligibility period, even if you did not enroll at that time.

The decisions you make during Open Enrollment will become effective January 1, 2007. There are some restrictions on eligibility for specific scenarios, so it is important that you reach out to your OST or the Benefits department to ask questions during this period.

The Benefits department will be distributing Open Enrollment materials in late October. In the restaurants, your OST will provide you with your materials packet. Read the materials provided in the packet and take advantage of this annual fall enrollment event. If you miss this date, you won't be able to make enrollment changes until the next Open Enrollment in the fall of 2007 (unless you experience a qualifying major life event such as birth, adoption, marriage or divorce). You will need to respond to your OST or to the Benefits department with your enrollment decisions no later than Nov. 13.

As you enjoy this fall season, please be sure to review your Open Enrollment materials and remember to contact the Benefits department at (818) 871-3075 with any questions.



Celebrity Sightings

If you have ever watched "Iron Chef" on The Food Network, a show with which many of our kitchen staff is familiar, then you'll recognize the name Iron Chef Morimoto. He visited the Las Vegas Cheesecake Factory for lunch on June 7. According to GM Pam Johnson, when KM Candelario Guevara recognized Chef Morimoto as he was walking

through the dining room, he dashed into the kitchen "as if he'd just seen Santa Claus" and told the kitchen staff who he had just encountered. Once the master chef had finished his meal, Candelario introduced himself to Morimoto and then invited

"Say sushi!" (Left to right) are Kitchen Managers Orrett Kentish, Andreas Jimenez, Iron Chef Morimoto (center), Candelario Guevara and Ed Sotelo.



him to join their manager's meeting. Morimoto graciously accepted, complimented the cuisine and posed for pictures. The team got quite a chuckle when the Iron Chef used the phrase "Say sushi!" instead of "Say cheese," while hamming it up for this photo.

Other celebrity sightings during the past several months include:

- **Dwayne Wade**, the National Basketball Association Finals MVP, came in to Dadeland (Miami), Fla. for lunch July 15 and signed a menu to the staff.
- **Ricky Henderson**, all-time stolen base leader and top lead-off hitter in Major League Baseball, was in Fresno, Calif. for lunch in late June. Fresno Bar Manager **Michael Deraffaele** and a few servers had the privilege of meeting him.
- Pro-golfer **Phil Mickelson** was in Oakbrook, Ill. mid-July for the Western Open. **Jim Thome**, home run slugger from the world-champion Chicago White Sox, is a regular and dines at our fine establishment three or four times a month.
- From July 5-10, **System of a Down**, one of the bands performing at the 2006 Ozzfest, came into the Phoenix, Ariz. location every day for lunch and dinner. A band member stated that they look for The Cheesecake Factory in every town they perform, not only for the great food and atmosphere, but also because they can enjoy themselves without being disturbed by fans and restaurant staff.
- In May, the North Scottsdale, Ariz. location had the pleasure of serving **Jennifer Aniston** and **Vince Vaughn** who were in town visiting his family. North Scottsdale Manager **Keke Moreno** said, "I personally spoke to them and they were very friendly and had a great experience." Jen and Vince said they enjoyed a great meal and the staff members were all very friendly and helpful, yet still respected their privacy. The North Scottsdale location had a second sighting when **Gary Busey** came in with his family June 15 to celebrate his birthday.

On Deck

Anticipated Opening Dates

- Chula Vista, CA - Oct. 2006**
- Pittsburgh II, PA - Oct. 2006**
- Omaha, NE - Nov. 2006**
- Milwaukee, WI - Nov. 2006**
- Pleasanton, CA - Nov. 2006**
- Lake Grove, NY - Nov. 2006**
- Fairfax, VA - Nov. 2006**
- Atlanta, GA (Cumberland) - Nov. 2006**
- Dulles, VA - Dec. 2006**
- Boise, ID - Dec. 2006**
- Santa Ana, CA - Dec. 2006**

Corporate Center "matesy" and their families enjoy the 2006 Summer Picnic in Malibu, Calif.



NRO Coordinator Danielle Jeknavorian was "Shipwrecked in Paradise" along with a Pirates For Hire Captain Jack Sparrow impressionist.

Cake Comments

Mail your comments and articles to:
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