



ISRAE HISTORY

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It is easy to imagine a handful of restaurant association executives in attendance at the National Restaurant Association Convention, sometime in the early to mid - 1930's, gathered around a hotel lobby, or bar, talking about common problems. Certainly one of those executives was bound to say, "Why don't all of us who come to the NRA Convention get together and sit down and discuss our common concerns and issues?" Whether it actually happened like that, or the brainstorm of one person who wrote to several of the others suggesting that they get together, or still some other way, we will probably never know. But we do know that when Myra B. Hays retired in 1970 after 34 years as Executive Secretary of the Restaurant Association of Maryland, she was acknowledged by her ISRAE peers as not having missed an ISRAE meeting since 1936.

We also know from the archives that by 1946, the "state and local secretaries" were meeting generally twice a year: once during the National Restaurant Association Convention and again during the Winter National Restaurant Association Board of Directors Meeting. The meetings, generally one-half to one and one-half days in length were clearly informal, with agendas (such as they were) structured principally in coordination with and by the National Restaurant Association's staff. The group, known originally as the State Restaurant Association Executives, was not incorporated, nor did it even have the formality of bylaws to guide its activities. Nonetheless, there was an informal structure at work, including the selection of one of the group as President.

RESTAURANT ASSOCIATIONS IN THE U.S.

We know that the National Restaurant Association was founded in 1919 and held its first national convention that year in Kansas City, Missouri. The second National Convention (in 1920) was the first held with exhibits. In 1923, NRA approved a plan for holding "sectional meetings." In 1924, NRA reported that there were 22 active local associations cooperating with the National. Most of those associations were almost certainly the local groups that ultimately became today's state restaurant associations. In 1929, the Los Angeles Restaurant Association presented a film titled "Soldiers of Service" at the NRA Convention. The film was subsequently shown all over the country and became a powerful factor in strengthening state and local associations.

The years of founding for early restaurant associations include:

1906	California	1927	Maryland
1908	Georgia	1928	Washington State
1914	Illinois	1933	Colorado; Indiana; Iowa;
1919	National; New Hampshire		Minnesota; Oklahoma; Wisconsin
1920	Ohio; Washington D.C.	1934	Massachusetts
1921	Michigan	1935	Missouri; New York
1926	Vermont		

By the mid-1930's it appears clear that at least some state and local restaurant association executives were meeting during the National Restaurant Association Convention. But, in 1935, NRA adopted a new schedule of regional meetings. While the exact purpose of

these meetings may not be clear, we know that in 1936, the Southern California Restaurant Association staged and hosted the first "Pacific Coast Regional Convention of the National Restaurant Association". This event, which ultimately triggered similar conventions in San Francisco, Portland and Seattle, indicated that at least in the western part of the nation there was a close working relationship between the NRA and local executives. It is not unreasonable to assume that the relationship extended well beyond conventions into other issues including membership, education and government affairs. Also during the late thirties, many of the "New Deal" programs such as the Office of Price Administration generated a number of restaurant association activities and close coordination between the NRA and state and local associations. And in 1938, NRA adopted "the educational program at Northwestern University" as an important means for developing and training state and local executives. (This "educational program" was the forerunner of today's Institutes for Organization conducted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce--still considered one of the foremost educational offerings available for association executives.) Although all restaurant association conventions were discontinued during World War II and travel was curtailed substantially, NRA conducted a series of wartime conferences. War-related issues such as price, rationing, etc., again provided a major activity for restaurant associations and close coordination between state and local associations and the NRA. These activities, as well as association operational issues (education, membership, newsletters, etc.), created even more of an impetus for restaurant association executives to get together in order to "better themselves and gain new ideas".

ISRAE AFTER WORLD WAR II

The first recorded President of the "State and Local Restaurant Association Secretaries" (1945-46) was Ray Fling, Michigan Restaurant and Caterers Association. The group met in March 1946 in conjunction with the National Restaurant Association Convention and in October 1946 in conjunction with the Pacific Coast Regional Convention of the NRA in Los Angeles. By the latter meeting, the group had changed its name to American Restaurant Trade Association Executives (ARTAE) and was discussing the concept of an executive's handbook for members. A pattern was established for the group to meet during the NRA annual convention and also during the NRA's winter board of directors meeting. NRA staff handled agendas and meeting coordination. From this early stage forward, there was a very close tie between the ARTAE and the NRA; and while the relationship was good, there were also occasions when state and local executives would call for "improving the relationship" without detailing specifics of what needed improvement. Subsequent events would indicate a general on the part of some of the states for a federation type membership structure for the NRA.

1947: During the group's meeting at the NRA Convention March 1947, completion of the executive's handbook was announced and members decided to assess dues (\$10 per year) to pay for them. The group also discussed producing a training film. In May 1947, President Mark Ocken raised the question "why not an International Restaurant Association Executives Club"? He also encouraged exchange mailings of newsletters among executives.

1948: During the annual conference at the NRA Convention (Cleveland), a committee of RTAE members (the group is now known as Restaurant Trade Association Executives) presented a paper to the NRA Board outlining its views in order to "result in closer cooperation and better understanding between the local, state and national associations". In July newsletters (called "The Executives Recorder"), Robroy Price, formerly executive of the Oklahoma Restaurant Association and a past president of the RTAE, is mentioned as Director, Membership Service of the NRA. In September, several RTAE members met in Chicago with the NRA Board of Directors. Their recommendations were submitted to the Board and several were approved: State presidents and secretaries were to be invited annually to attend the national board meeting; NRA would establish a service department for state and local executives with an NRA staff member in charge of state and local association problems; RTAE members would be appointed to NRA Board committees in an advisory capacity. The Board deferred on a recommendation for "an affiliate plan of membership with NRA". In December, Robroy Price left the NRA to return to the Oklahoma Restaurant Association.

1949: At the RTAE annual meeting in conjunction with the NRA Convention (Atlantic City), RTAE proposed to NRA that each state association recognized by the NRA have a seat on the NRA Board with the Director selected by the state association. During this meeting, the group also discussed forming a state restaurant executives association (as opposed to an organization for both state and local association executives).

1950-1955: Records during this period are rather sparse. There are no mentions of a 1950-51 president in the archives and no RTAE newsletters for more than a year. During 1952-54, President Mark Strong made a big push for regional meetings of RTAE members.

1956-60: A major project during 1956-57 was to establish a uniform membership decal design for state associations. The effort generated considerable debate and correspondence and was finally resolved in January 1958 with the first use of the decal to be 1959. This decal design was used for many years by virtually all state restaurant associations and is still used by some. In 1957, NRA brought Travis Elliot on board and began offering its Executive Development Program throughout the country. This approach started a new direction for educational offerings by both the NRA and state associations. For several years, RTAE had a special "executive committee", but not the traditional committee of officers. It was made up mostly of the "veteran" members and seemed to deal principally with issues related to NRA and state association relations. In 1958, the committee (with approval of the RTAE members) again recommended to NRA that it explore and study the possibility of promoting an affiliate membership plan with NRA for state associations. No immediate action was taken by the NRA. The May 1958 RTAE meeting was somewhat disorganized and, based on correspondence in the archives, allegedly resulted from lack of NRA staff liaison with RTAE. The correspondence also implied that the NRA Executive Vice President did not show interest in RTAE. The following month, RTAE President Robert Henry suggested that RTAE might consider "a conference type of program and meeting at a spot nearer the heart of

the country at a time entirely separate from NRA Board meetings." This statement was in reference to the fact that the January 1959 NRA Board Meeting would be in Florida and was expected to cause difficulty in getting RTAE members to attend. In July 1958, RTAE past president Elmer Conforti again suggested a national association of state secretaries-not to undermine or replace RTAE, which included a large number of local "secretaries," but to address the "peculiar problems" of the states. In 1959, RTAE became the Society of Restaurant Trade Association Executives. Also in 1959, NRA co-sponsored the existing triennial (later biennial) San Francisco show produced by the Golden Gate Restaurant Association. The show was renamed the Western National Restaurant Convention and Exposition. (NRA would cosponsor the show with GGRA each year it was produced through 1980.)

1961-1965: During 1961-62, NRA launched an "aircade" program to take NRA officials to cities across the nation to discuss national and local problems face-to-face. The arcade program continued through 1964. In December 1961, SRTAE held its first "mid-winter" meeting separate from a National Restaurant Association Board Meeting or other event. The meeting was held at the Skirvin Hotel, Oklahoma City. In December 1962, SRTAE met at the Royal Orleans Hotel, New Orleans. From this meeting forward, minutes of board and membership meetings are complete, bylaws are in place (though date of adoption is not known), and the Palmer House Hotel in Chicago is the site of ISRAE annual meetings through 1979. During the December 1962 meeting in New Orleans, a motion to change the name of the organization to American Society of Restaurant Executives was tabled and a committee was appointed to review the bylaws and study the name issue. During 1962 and 1963 there was a considerable discussion concern among members about a trade show rating system introduced by IFMA. SRTAE met in advance of the NRA Board Meeting and Show in May 1963. The Executives Handbook had been revised and was distributed; the group voted to change its name to International Society of Restaurant Association Executives. During the May 1963 NRA Board of Directors Meeting, the NRA Board adopted a new membership concept called "Plan O". This concept provided "Organizational Membership" in the National Restaurant Association for state and local associations that wished to participate. The program provided a loose affiliation by allowing the participating associations to identify themselves as an Organizational Member of the NRA but did not extend any NRA membership benefits to the participating associations' members nor did it extend any new voting rights to the associations. Two restaurants were elected to the NRA board for one year to represent those associations participating in Plan O; the President of ISRAE was appointed as an ex-officio member of the NRA Board. In 1964, 39 state and regional restaurant associations had joined Plan O; in 1965 there were 44 Plan O members. ISRAE truly became international at its May 1964 meeting in Chicago when Murray Grigg, Canadian Restaurant Association joined. During 1964 and 1965, ISRAE discussed and ultimately discarded the idea of hiring a part time or full time Executive Director. In May 1965, ISRAE decided to put its banking in Chicago on a permanent basis and to annually re-elect a Treasurer to maintain the records. Bylaws amendments to implement this change were adopted in May 1966.

1966-1980: During the May 1966 ISRAE conference held in conjunction with the NRA Convention, ISRAE proposed to sponsor a "no-host" dinner for state restaurant association presidents and spouses on the Sunday evening during the NRA show. This proposal was obviously the catalyst for the NRA to host a reception for state restaurant association presidents and chief staff executives on the Sunday evening of the convention beginning in May 1967. At the May 1967 meeting, ISRAE decided to hold a dinner for members only on the Friday preceding future NRA shows. The group would look to major companies such as Kraft and Continental Coffee to sponsor these dinners. That same year, ISRAE lost its Canadian member but gained a new NRA liaison when Murray Grigg became the Assistant Executive Vice President of the NRA. In addition, ISRAE initiated a comprehensive study of problems related to multi-unit restaurant companies and their membership and participation in state associations. In November 1967, ISRAE adopted a new Constitution and Bylaws, which for the first time gave voting rights to "Associate" members of ISRAE and provided for membership for individuals that manage multiple associations. Dues were also increased during this meeting for the following year from \$25 to \$35 for chief executives (associates remained at \$25).

Throughout 1971, revision of the ISRAE Executives Handbook was a major priority with different handbook chapters to be written by various members. The finished product was finally published in the fall with a sales price of \$15. Regional meetings of members were also attempted-unsucccessfully-in various parts of the country the year. Throughout this period, Plan O continued in place. However, in May 1973 NRA announced that while it would no longer have the Plan O Committee as a standing committee of the NRA Board, a representative from the committee would be welcome to present reports of committee actions at NRA Board Meetings. ISRAE members began talking about federation between NRA and the states during this period and in May 1974 appointed a planning committee charged with discussion of this concept with NRA. In 1975, Plan O finally came to an end and NRA began a short-lived promotion for state associations to affiliate with NRA as "Associate Members". Also in 1975, NRA began a program of financial support for ISRAE mid-winter meetings by reimbursing airline and two nights lodging for one member from each state association. In return, ISRAE provided a full day of programming for NRA use. (NRA continued the reimbursement program in one form or another for several years.) Later, in 1977 and 1978, NRA hosted ISRAE in Washington S.C. for the mid-winter meeting. In late 1977, NRA hired Wisconsin Restaurant Association executive and then ISRAE president A. Kolbet Schrichte to fill a key management position as liaison to the state associations. The decade of the 70s was a period of considerable change in state restaurant association leadership. Many of the long time executives either died or retired during this time opening the door to many new faces in ISRAE. At the same time, ISRAE activities were relatively simple and traditional: self-help and education with minimal tension in the NRA/state association relationship. In May 1973, ISRAE had \$1776 in the bank; in 1977, the bank balance was \$3,505. In 1979, dues for chief executives was increased to \$50.

1980-1990: ISRAE started the new decade with \$3658 in the bank, a new "permanent" treasurer, and an old friend (NRA Washington Counsel Bob Neville) serving as NRA executive vice president during NRA's search for a new chief staff executive. That new

executive (Robert Bradford) came on board in January 1981, the first NRA staff head designated as President, and made an early commitment to strengthening ties with the states by establishing a new staff position titled Director of State Relations. Bradford (and his title) departed one year later; however, the State Relations position remained and grew in stature and importance for many years. ISRAE continued to discuss a long festering concern about some of the chain restaurant companies that pointedly declined to join state restaurant associations while seeking government relations information and services from the states. During the early 80s, state association executives as well as ISRAE meetings became more focused on national government affairs issues. Congressional action requiring tip reporting may have generated more outcries and concerns from state executives than any time since Congress extended the Fair Labor Standards Act and federal minimum wage to the restaurant industry in 1964. Some state executives openly criticized NRA for the legislative outcome and for its characterization of the outcome as a "victory" for the industry. In addition, state executives became more vocal in challenging NRA proposals to offer insurance and other member service programs that competed with state programs. In 1982-23, ISRAE established a chain membership ad hoc committee and a government affairs liaison committee to work on chain membership issues and the tip reporting issue. The latter was later deemed especially useful in "improving relations with NRA." November 1984 brought a new initiative for exploring the possibility of a "membership connection or linkage" between the state associations and the NRA. This time, the initiative came from NRA and was met with courteous but cautious response from ISRAE. Despite the fact that ISRAE was a self help individual membership society that did not take positions or express opinions on issues that fall solely within the purview of individual associations, the ISRAE executive committee responded to the NRA proposal in May 1985 with a recommendation that every state restaurant association adopt a "Resolution of Cooperation" expressing the support of the state associations for NRA's government affairs representation on their behalf. Adoption of the resolution would publicly stipulate that NRA spoke for that state's members in lobbying Congress even though they were not members of the NRA. By November 1985, 44 states had adopted the resolution and ultimately, only one state (Kansas) declined to adopt it. This issue prompted a comprehensive review of the bylaws and operating policies of ISRAE. The bylaws revisions adopted in May 1986 retained the limitation on taking positions, and even added a restriction against recommending any action, on issues that fall within the purview of individual associations. However, the bylaws made clear that this limitation did not preclude debate or discussion on such issues in keeping with the educational purpose of the society. At the 1986 fall meeting, the ISRAE Board adopted official policies and procedures, authorized the incorporation of the Society and, with some concern as to the value and questions as to the purpose, offered to cosponsor the new State Presidents' Roundtable planned by NRA during the 1987 NRA Convention. In late 1986, NRA began talking about redirecting its long-standing financial support for state executives' travel expense from the ISRAE fall meeting to the NRA Public Affairs Conference. ISRAE thanked NRA for assisting with travel expenses at ISRAE meetings and committed its continues support of the Public Affairs Conference regardless of the NRA's decision. (NRA continued the fall meeting travel support through 1991.) Also in 1986, NRA entered into a new "joint membership test" with the Pennsylvania Restaurant

Association. The concept, providing for membership in both associations at one dues rate, maintained the autonomy of both organizations and set the stage for a new era in NRA/state restaurant association relations. The tests with Pennsylvania and then Oregon formed the basis of today's dual membership program, which became NRA's primary tactic for achieving the membership growth targets in its strategic plan. In 1987, ISRAE was incorporated in the state of Arkansas, dues were increased to \$100 for chief executives and \$35 for staff (effective in 1988), new membership plaques were adopted to be given to all the members in good standing (to all new members in the future) and the Board of Directors authorized the development of staff specialist meetings (for trade show managers, publications editors, etc). NRA/state relations became increasingly tense during 1988 as the joint (dual) membership program continued to grow and state associations sought a larger voice in NRA political positions and strategies. These issues were the subject of a series of meetings in 1998 between NRA (staff and later officers) and the ISRAE Ad Hoc Committee on Joint Membership, Communications, and Grassroots Involvement. Specific recommendations by the ad hoc committee were presented to ISRAE and NRA in May 1989.

1990-1999: ISRAE entered the nineties publishing a brand new loose leaf binder membership directory for each member, continuing discussions on NRA/state association relations and initiating new discussions about the amount and use of ISRAE's growing cash reserves, which totaled \$34,259 at the start of 1990. Highlights of the decade include: the addition of a summer legislative conference in ISRAE's annual educational programming (started in 1991 as an NRA/ISRAE conference on youth employment and conducted in 1992 as a combined government affairs/convention directors conference); redirection of NRA reimbursement of state executives' travel expenses from the fall ISRAE meeting to the NRA Public Affairs Conference (1992); finally, after years of discussion, shortening the length of the May meeting and moving it to Saturday and Sunday of the NRA Convention and introduction of an ISRAE sponsored reception for state association presidents and executives to replace the comparable reception previously sponsored by NRA (both in 1993). Also, introduction of a comprehensive sponsorship program to underwrite all ISRAE conferences; continued co-sponsorship (and experimentation with format) of the State Presidents' Roundtable during the NRA Convention; periodic ad hoc meetings of state association presidents to discuss issues and concerns without executives present during the NRA Convention and Public Affairs Conference; explosion of growth in the number of staff associate members of ISRAE; recruitment of new international members from several Canadian provinces, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom; strong growth in attendance at ISRAE conferences and declining interest in the ISRAE newsletter. In terms of the relationship with NRA, highlights included growth of NRA's dual membership program to incorporate all but two of the state associations, and a growing tendency to address dual membership issues at ISRAE meetings; introduction of regular meetings between the ISRAE officers and NRA officers at each NRA Board Meeting (started in 1995); the NRA Educational Foundation and its sales policies becoming a primary source of angst among state executives in NRA/state relations; and inclusion of the ISRAE President on two NRA chief staff executive search committees. Other highlights were introduction of a new-member orientation program (1996); development of a separate "Educational

Council" to produce and distribute foodservice training films and materials (ultimately aborted); solicitation of proposals and appointment of a contract Business Manager in January 1998 after several years of discussion about electing a "permanent secretary" or hiring a full or part time "executive" to handle the growing workload of the Society; the development of a professional salary survey conducted by an independent third party; a comprehensive member opinion survey followed by a strategic planning retreat conducted by a professional facilitator and development of a long range strategic plan (1999). The stage is clearly set for ISRAE to continue to grow and evolve as an important vehicle for enhancing the professionalism of restaurant association executives and the associates they serve.

NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES

Al Carder, one of the NRA founders, was its first Secretary, serving from 1919 to 1928. The NRA executives that followed Carder were Frank J. Wiffler (1928-58; Wiffler's title was changed to Executive Vice President in 1947), Donald Greenaway (1958-68), Richard Brown (1968-72), William P. Fisher (1972-77), Brian Harron (1977-80; during Harron's tenure, NRA moved its headquarters from Chicago to Washington D.C.), Bob Neville (1980 as interim; Neville was NRA's Washington Counsel and Director of Government Affairs), Robert Bradford (1981-82; Bradford was hired with the title of President), Bob Neville (1982-84; title was changed back to Executive Vice President upon Bradford's departure), William P. Fisher (1984-96), Herman Cain (1996-99; Cain was hired with the title of CEO and President).

ISRAE MEETING LOCATIONS

Fall & Summer meeting locations:

- 1961 Skirvin Hotel, Oklahoma City, OK
- 1962 Royal Orleans Hotel, New Orleans, LA
- 1963 Dallas, TX
- 1964 Safari Hotel, Scottsdale, AZ
- 1965 Sun & Surf Hotel, Sarasota, FL
- 1966 Atlanta, GA
- 1967 Brown Hotel, Louisville, KY
- 1968 Broadwater Beach Hotel, Gulfport, MS
- 1969 Hotel Sahara, Las Vegas, NV
- 1970 Schraffts Motor Lodge, Fort Lauderdale, FL
- 1971 La Mansion, San Antonio, TX
- 1972 Alameda Plaza, Kansas City, MO
- 1973 New Orleans, LA
- 1974
- 1975 Bahia Mar Hotel, Fort Lauderdale, FL
- 1976 La Mansion, San Antonio, TX
- 1977 L'Enfant Plaza, Washington D.C.
- 1978 Crystal City Marriott, Arlington, VA
- 1979 Vacation Village Hotel, San Diego, CA

- 1980 Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill, Washington D.C.
- 1981 Keystone Lodge, Keystone, CO
- 1982 Royal Sonesta Hotel, New Orleans, LA
- 1983 Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill, Washington D.C.
- 1984 Callaway Gardens, Pine Mountain, GA
- 1985 Walt Disney World Conference Center, Orlando, FL
- 1986 Hotel Eldorado, Santa Fe, NM
- 1987 Holiday Inn @ Union Station, Indianapolis, IN
- 1988 Boston Park Plaza Hotel, Boston, MA
- 1989 Hawaiian Regent Hotel, Honolulu, HI
- 1990 Park Hilton Hotel, Hot Springs, AR
- 1991 Opryland Hotel, Nashville, TN (summer)
- San Diego Marriott, San Diego, CA
- 1992 The Lodge at Vail, Vail, CO (summer)
- Opryland Hotel, Nashville, TN
- 1993 Jackson Lake Lodge, Jackson Hole, WY (summer)
- Marriott Marquis Hotel, New York, NY
- 1994 Samoset Resort, Rockport, ME (summer)
- Royal Sonesta Hotel, New Orleans, LA
- 1995 The Springs Golf Club Resort, Spring Green, WI (summer)
- Crown Sterling Suites, Phoenix, AZ
- 1996 Radisson Plaza Hotel Admiral, Toronto, Ontario, Canada (summer)
- Hyatt Regency Riverwalk, San Antonio, TX
- 1997 Doubletree Islander Hotel, Newport, RI (summer)
- Key West Hilton Hotel, Key West, FL
- 1998 The Broadmoor, Colorado Springs, CO (summer)
- The Mills House Hotel, Charleston, SC
- 1999 Kingsmill Resort, Williamsburg, VA (summer)
- Eldorado Hotel, Santa Fe, NM
- 2000 Harveys Resort Hotel & Casino, Lake Tahoe, NV (summer)
- 2001 Grouse Mountain Lodge (summer), Whitefish, Montana
- Baltimore Marriott Waterfront, Baltimore, MD
- 2002 Trapp Family Lodge (summer), Stowe, Vermont
- Loews Miami Beach Hotel, Miami Beach, FL
- 2003 The Broadmoor (summer)
- Gaylord Opryland, Nashville, TN
- 2004 The Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island, MI (summer)
- Loews Coronado Bay Resort & Spa, San Diego, CA
- 2005 The Westin Bayshore, Vancouver, BC (summer)
- Westin Rio Mar Beach Resort, Rio Grande, PR
- 2006 Westin Diplomat, Hollywood, FL (summer)
- Westin Maui, Maui, HI
- 2007 The Coeur d'Alene Resort, Coeur d'Alene, ID (summer)
- Royal Sonesta Hotel, New Orleans, LA

