

Wisconsin GROCER

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE WISCONSIN GROCERS ASSOCIATION

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OCTOBER 18 & 19, 2011

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See page 16.

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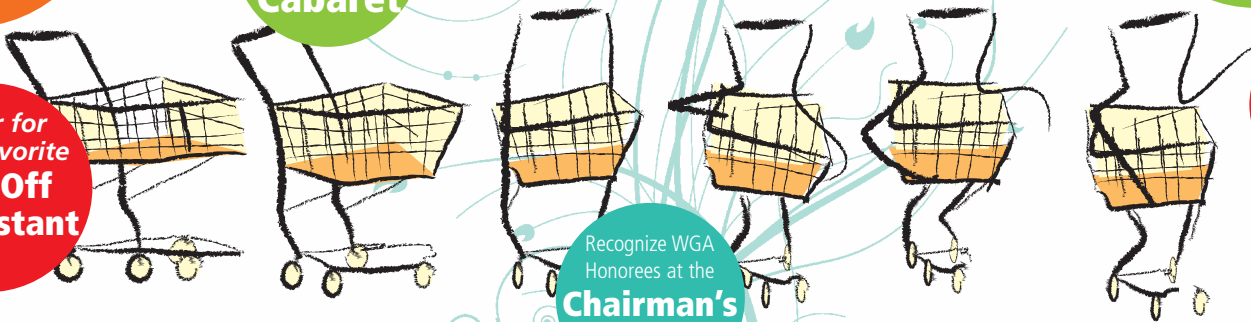
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2011 Award Winners Left to right: Community Service Award **Paul Butera**, **Joan & Ted Majdecki**, **Terry Tryggeseth**. Vendor of the Year Award **Gary Neu and Mark Maloney**, Russ Davis Wholesale. Grocer of the Year Award **Dennis Kramer**. Excellence in Operations Award **Pam Coy**, **Francis Kranz**, **Jason Nilssen**, **Mike Ptacek**, **Steve "Red" Salfai**. See pages 32-34, 39, 48, 49 for more.

The Wisconsin Grocers Association is proud of the four recipients of the 2011 EXCELLENCE IN OPERATIONS AWARD

Individuals awarded WGA's Excellence in Operations award are recognized for their professional efforts as store owners, managers, directors, and general managers on their work ethic, commitment to the grocery industry, and creating opportunities for store associates.

Pam Coy, Viking Village Foods, Reedsburg, **Francis Kranz**, Zinke's Village Market, Wisconsin Dells, and **Jason Nilssen**, Nilssen's Supervalu, Baldwin.

Pam Coy



Pam Coy's work at Viking Village Foods and Viking Express Market can be

described as nothing else but exemplary. She prides herself most on her interactions with her customers and giving them the best service possible.

Pam Coy finds it crucial for all workers to incorporate self-worth into their jobs.

Pam strives to have new GM items well merchandised throughout her stores, especially with seasonal layouts. She makes sure the customer has no reason to go into one of

the three surrounding Wal-Mart Super Centers and that they continue to support their local grocery store.

Pam stays a step ahead of Super Centers in service by being actively involved in her community.

Pam stays a step ahead of Super Centers in service by being actively involved in her community. A main advocate for community athletics, Pam is essential to the Reedsburg/Baraboo Annual Steak Fry Challenge which raises thousands of dollars for each of the athletic organizations in the community. Her organization believes in working with local schools and various organizations in fundraising, helping them succeed with their events by raising as much as possible. This has developed

into a regular program over the years.

She cares about statewide issues as an active member of the Wisconsin Grocers Association. She is also on the Reedsburg Chamber of Commerce Board.

Pam has personally mentored two individuals in Reedsburg, giving management responsibilities to grow their talents and skills. She finds it crucial for all workers to incorporate self-worth into their jobs—another demonstration of how she represents *excellence* when it comes to operations.

Pam enjoys what she does. She believes in taking care of the customer and following through. She tries to make sure that she is someone her customers, staff and community can rely on. Most of all she does not want to just sell to people, but she wants to know them and be available to them; she wants them to know they can count on and trust both herself and her staff. ■

Francis Kranz



Francis Kranz has worked for Zinke's Village Market for the past forty

years, beginning in June of 1971. He has worked all departments in the store from produce manager to meat cutter to his current position as store manager. Fran's distinction in operations comes as a result of hard work and rare talent that he exemplifies by daily excellents.

Fran is known as "The Coach" to those who have worked under him, as he encourages associates to attain excellence. Expectations are clear, directions are carried out, and the staff is constantly taking care of the customers who see, feel, and get what they expect from their small-town market.

Fran is known for his outreach to new workers. As part of his

foreign workers program, Fran spends hours speaking with and interviewing students from around the world who are hoping for more opportunity in the U.S. Fran has worked with this program for 15 years, selecting ten students each year.

Fran's extraordinary consistency sets him apart from his peers.

Fran consistently makes methodical plans, setting in place advertising, pricing, profitability measures, store staffing, and product ordering; his plans get results.

Fran helped start the Summer Bonus Program to reduce employee turnover during the summer months in the sunny and fun-filled Wisconsin Dells. Fran's leadership and guidance of the Summer Bonus Program reduced employee turnover by 40 percent.

Fran's extraordinary consistency sets him apart from his peers. He has run the store to year-after-year record increases in retail sales while maintaining virtually the same base staff despite a grueling pace during the summer months. Fran performs at this level despite challenges, illustrating the strength of his character, and the resolve of his fortitude. ■

Jason Nilssen



The entire Nilssen family has always been a part of the grocery industry. In 1903 Jason's

Great Grandfather started Nilssen's SuperValu in Baldwin, Wisconsin. Jason worked for the family business while going to school. He graduated high school and went on to more

schooling. After graduation, Jason worked at the managerial level for Erickson's Diversified Corporation and then came to Nelson's SuperValu in 1999. In 2006, Jason and his wife Teresa purchased Nelson's SuperValu and changed the name to Nilssen's SuperValu.

What sets Jason apart is his care and commitment towards his employees.

What sets Jason apart from others is his care and commitment towards his employees. His deep roots in the industry have undoubtedly moved him to make that special effort each and every day for his employees, where it is making sure to say good morning or annual decisions like health care choices.

Jason feels that whenever you find a good employee, you should provide opportunities

to retain that employee for as long as possible. Jason is always thinking of new ways to show his employees his appreciation. Some examples of appreciation are birthday certificates, cookouts, gift certificates, anniversary appreciation parties, social events, and annual holiday parties at the local bowling alley. Jason's appreciation for his employees is unmatched.

Jason's commitment to his employees is only matched by his care for his family and community. Among other community involvements, Jason holds a Children's Safety Fair, bringing multiple safety departments from the area to give demonstrations and educate children. He also holds many "round up" campaigns which allow local organizations to raise money for their cause. Jason has won numerous Master Marketer awards. This award is given by SuperValu Inc. to retailers that go above and beyond in areas of marketing and community service. ■

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Mike Ptacek, Ptacek's IGA, Prescott, and **Steve "Red" Salfai**, Red's Piggly Wiggly, Omro.

Mike Ptacek



Mike has been a part of the grocery industry for generations at Ptacek's

IGA, originally called The Red and White Grocery Store. The business turns 100 this year.

Mike purchased the store from his parents on January 1, 1979 and moved the store in 1989 to its current location at 1449 Orrin Road.

Mike embraces the idea that "if we lock up our personal talents they are not good—we must share our talents with everyone."

Mike understands that the store is only as good as its employees, and therefore provides his department heads with much autonomy; they too can feel a sense of ownership in the store. Mike believes in positive reinforcement and provides incentives for his employees, ranging from dinners, to bonuses, to trips.

Mike has luxury of working with excellent employees; all department heads have a tenure of 20 years or more, demonstrating their commitment and satisfaction in working for Mike.

What truly sets Mike apart from his peers is his extraordinary commitment to his community. He has donated to, and dedicated his time to the Knights of Columbus, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts, VFW, American Legion, Susan G. Coleman Foundation, YMCA, churches, local families and, of course, his employees.

Mike has been a volunteer on the fire and ambulance team for over 20 years, is a veteran of Vietnam, and a three-time IGA 5-star store honoree. In 1992 he received the Business of the Year award from the Prescott Chamber of Commerce.

Aside from his business accomplishments, he has taught Catholic school classes for 15 years, and was the Prescott Grand Marshall in 1990.

Mike embraces the idea that "if we lock up our personal talents they are no good—we must share our talents with everyone." Mike lives this message each and every day. ■

Steve "Red" Salfai



Red has been a part of the grocery industry for nearly 40 years,

exemplifying the phrase "lift yourself up by your bootstraps."

Red's career in the grocery industry has taken him through numerous positions beginning with bagger, onto stocker, produce manager, assistant manager, store manager, general manager, and currently, owner and President of Piggly Wiggly in Omro, Wisconsin. He values the influence of the late Libero Angeli who shared his knowledge and passion for this business. Red's comprehensive understanding and passion for this business is undoubtedly one to be recognized.

Red's passion however does not end at the doorway to the store. As a company, he and his wife, Sherry, sponsor local events such as the Easter Egg hunt, the Fourth of July fireworks, and numerous events that support the Chamber of Commerce. (Commitment to the community is a family

tradition: Sherry is currently the Chamber of Commerce board President.)

Red has served as an executive board member of the Chamber of Commerce and believes his shared time is as important as his donations. Red also instills this belief in his employees by providing encouragement for community involvement and making schedules flexible enough to devote time to the causes his employees believe in.

Giving back to the community continues to be an essential part of the success Red has achieved.

As owners, Red and Sherry also sponsor many non-profit organizations, such as Kiwanis, summer baseball leagues for youth, school groups and sports teams, and the Knights of Columbus. Red was honored by the Knights of Columbus recently with the Community Service Award—one of only two awards given to nonmembers.

Giving back to the community continues to be an essential part of the success Red has achieved in his time with the grocery industry. ■

2011 GROCER OF THE YEAR

Dennis Kramer Kramer's County Market

By Ben Schultz

Courtesy Abbotsford Tribune

Phonograph

Local businessman and loyal community advocate Dennis Kramer was honored Monday as the Grocer of the Year by the Wisconsin Grocers Association.

Dennis' most important asset throughout his career has been his employees. Dennis always finds ways to show them his appreciation whether it be through store luncheon events or flexible work schedules.

Kramer, owner of Kramer's County Market, was greeted by the surprise announcement Monday afternoon at the store in Abbotsford. He was joined by family, friends, employees, and community leaders as he accepted the honor.

Brandon Scholz, WGA president and CEO, along with SuperValu executives, presented Kramer with a temporary plaque and cake for his achievement. (SuperValu is the



Honored owner, Dennis Kramer, left, is greeted with applause by County Market employees as he prepares to accept the Grocer of the Year award at the store. He was joined by community leaders, family members and others in a congratulatory gathering. TP STAFF PHOTO



supplier of many County Market stores.) Kramer will receive the official award Oct. 19 at the WGA Innovation Expo in Wisconsin Dells.

"This is truly special," Kramer said upon receiving the award. "This is an honor and a surprise. Thank you."

Scholz said Kramer is a standout in the field and the honor is reserved for a very select few people who invest not only in their stores, but also in the community around them.

"Dennis has shown a lifetime commitment to the business," Scholz said. "He is set apart from others in the grocery business."

That lifetime commitment was trumpeted in the nomination for the award, submitted by Kevin Mahany of SuperValu.

"The one thing about Dennis is his dedication to the grocery industry, his employees and the community," the nomination read. "A passion to improve his community and store, and opportunities for

his employees has been a lifelong commitment."

The nomination process is by no means an easy, quick assessment. Kramer's entry was four pages long, announcing his vast community work along with his history with the business.



"It's a very, very competitive field," Scholz said.

Kramer said he was shocked to see a large gathering outside his business on a Monday afternoon,

having no idea what was in store for him.

"I didn't know anything about it," he said shortly after receiving the award. "It's a pretty neat experience to have this honor."

He noted the WGA and SuperValu group made the trip from Green Bay just to present the honor. He said the award is especially meaningful because he is being evaluated by his peers.

>

KRAMER, continued

History in the business

Dennis grew up working in the grocery business for his father, Howard, who opened the first IGA in Abbotsford. In the 1970s, Dennis took over the store and doubled it in size, renaming it Kramer's Family Center.

The business continued to grow through the 1970s, with the completion of an in-store bakery in 1978.

The store was struck by a terrible fire in December 1982 that left it in ruins. Dennis made a commitment to rebuild the store and had an advisory board of local people to help in the process.

The new store opened in November 1983 and saw sales soar 25 percent above expectations.

The Grocer of the Year award is actually just one more honor in a long line of notable achievements. Dennis was recognized as the IGA Retailer of the Year in 1992. He repaid the community with a party outside the store that brought in 900 people and featured free food with a live band.

Other honors over the years included the 1996 Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year, 2006 WGA Excellence in Operation award, and 2008 Chamber of Commerce Community Service Award. Dennis also has been extremely active in his community of Abbotsford, as well as across the state. He has been involved with many organizations including:

- Chairman of the Abbotsford Centennial Committee
- Chairman of the First Lutheran Church
- Chairman of the Christ Lutheran Church
- Chamber President
- IGA Board of Directors
- WGA Board of Directors
- 1996 Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year
- 2008 Chamber of Commerce Community Service Award
- Volunteer for Wisconsin Lions Eye Bank Transport Team

Dennis took a break from the business in 2001 when he sold the store to the CC Corporation, which converted the IGA to a County Market. He bought it back in 2004 and remains the owner.

"I missed the business and I missed dealing with people on an everyday basis," he said in the nomination form. "I grew up in the grocery business, and I guess it is still in my blood."

Scholz said Dennis' brief absence was felt across the industry.

"When he left the business we wished he hadn't," he said.

Dennis' community involvement has been varied and productive. He has served as Chamber of Commerce president, chairman at Christ Lutheran Church, a member of the Clark County Economic Development Corporation, a founder of First City Forward, and chairman of the Abbotsford Centennial Committee. He has also served on the board of directors of IGA and the WGA.



Kramer said the Grocer of the Year award would not have been possible without his wife, Beverly.

"You put in a lot of long hours," he said. "And through it all Beverly has always been very understanding and supportive."

He also recognized the work of the employees of County Market.

"These things don't happen without all the other people," he said. "We're fortunate enough to have a lot of great people working here." ■



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The Wisconsin Grocers Association honors the recipients of the 2011 COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

The WGA Community Service Award honorees may come from all levels of the grocery store, from stocker to manager to owner. This year three candidates exemplified our stated ideals: **Paul Butera**, Piggly Wiggly Midwest, **Ted & Joan Majdecki**, Majdecki Sentry, and **Terry Tryggeseth**, Trig's Eagle River.

Paul Butera



Paul Butera has a long history in the grocery industry and currently serves as CEO of Piggly Wiggly Midwest in Sheboygan. Butera was chosen to receive the 2011 WGA

Community Service Award because he demonstrates a concern for those less fortunate in the community in which he does business.

Butera purchased the company in 2006. Prior to that, Butera was a well-known grocer in the Chicago area as the owner/operator of Butera Market, one of Chicago's oldest and largest independent grocery chains. He opened his first store in 1962.

In 2010, Paul Butera chose to support the Kraft Huddle to Fight Hunger program. This national program invited retailers to participate in a marketing effort that

...nearly 100 food pantries throughout the state of Wisconsin received food to help stock the shelves and feed hungry people.

supported hunger relief at a local level. Piggly Wiggly committed to donate one million meals to Feeding America food banks in Wisconsin, the largest commitment from any retailer in the state for the Kraft Huddle to Fight

Hunger program. As a result, nearly 100 food pantries throughout the state of Wisconsin received food to help stock the shelves and feed hungry people.

We commend Paul Butera for taking an active role in alleviating hunger in the communities where he operates his stores.



Joan & Ted Majdecki

Ted has been in the grocery industry for 32 years; he began by helping in his grandfather's store in West Allis. His giving spirit came partly from his grandfather, who showed movies on the exterior store walls for the community. Ted later managed Sentry Foods and Super Savers with both Godfrey's & Fleming's Foods. He bought his first store in West Allis in 2001.

Ted has been a big proponent of the community during his decade of store ownership. This year will see the eleventh annual Sentry Foods for Charity Golf Outing, and in the ten previous years that Ted has organized the event, they have raised over

...they have raised over \$120,000 for many different charities.

\$120,000 for many different charities, including the MACC Fund, United Cerebral Palsy, Children's Miracle Network, American Cancer Society, Healing the Children, and Team Up! For Families.

Ted and Joan gave a \$35,000 donation to Menomonee Falls High School Booster Club for the improvement of the Athletic Field Complex just last year. Ted also donates a breakfast snack for 200 special needs kids attending the Milwaukee Shrine Circus each year for the last five years. Ted and Joan have also thrown two silent auctions each year that have raised approximately \$80,000, donating proceeds to numerous charities and organizations.

This philosophy of giving to the community has made Ted and Joan's stores successful despite increased competition—many families shop at his stores because of the impact the Majdecki's have made on their community.



Terry Tryggeseth

Terry Tryggeseth works for Trig's Eagle River and while many grocery store managers and owners are involved in their communities, for Terry Tryggeseth it is a slightly different story.

Terry got his start as a bag boy, but he continued to gain knowledge in the industry and eventually became the store manager of Sunrise Foods in Rhinelander. His career with Trig's began in Rhinelander where he was Assistant Store Director, and when the opportunity arose to again manage his own store Terry became Store Director of the Eagle River store.

A lot of the community service work Terry does helps drive the Eagle River tourism industry so you could say the work he does affects everyone since all businesses in town benefit from

his services. Terry is not just *involved* in the community, but is *entrenched* in it.

proceeds support silent sport organizations and the Eagle River Area Visitors Center.

Terry also shows his big heart by hiring and mentoring people with disabilities, building their self-confidence, and helping them grow.

Some other groups and activities Terry supports in Eagle River include: Chamber of Commerce Member, Klondike Days President, Eagle River Revitalization Program, Downtown Business Association, an executive board member of Trees for tomorrow, and the Eagle River Children's Museum.

Terry is woven into the fabric of Eagle City; he is not just involved in the community, but is entrenched in it. ■

An event Terry and his wife, Gretchen, help out with is Journey's Marathon, a qualifier for the Boston marathon in which all

The Wisconsin Grocers Association honors the recipients of the 2011 VENDOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

The WGA's 2011 Vendor of the Year award recognizes vendors who go the extra mile to ensure their retail grocery customers are satisfied and their products are on the shelves. The recipients of **2011 WGA Vendor of the Year** award are **Gary Neu and Mark Maloney of Russ Davis Wholesale.**



Left to Right: Gary Neu (President, Russ Davis Wholesale), Alan Alden (Director of Retail Operations, Trig's), Brian Johnson (Produce Director, Trig's), Mark Maloney (Branch Manager, Russ Davis Wholesale), Lee Guenther (President and Chief Executive Officer, Trig's), Brandon Scholz (President/CEO, WGA).

Russ Davis Wholesale

Russ Davis Wholesale is a wholesaler with a Retailer's mentality. Both Gary Neu and Mark Maloney believe in partnerships with their retailers by supplying quality produce and exceptional service.

Russ Davis delivers to stores seven days a week, ensuring the freshest products everyday as well as being able to immediately fulfill their customer's requests. This is evident with their new venture called "Crazy Fresh," which—through the construction of a new state-of-the-art facility—gives Russ Davis



Wholesale the latest technology to ensure the freshest quality produce.

Russ Davis Wholesale is also dedicated to the overall success of the industry by promoting education....The communities where Russ Davis is located have benefited greatly wby the regular donations to organizations.

RDW is also dedicated to the overall success of the industry by promoting education. They regularly host retailers at the annual Product Marketing Association Convention and also supply their retailers with a weekly educational *Produce Journal* about seasonal items, industry trends, and merchandising tips.



The communities with Russ Davis Wholesale branches are have benefited greatly from regular donations to organizations; many of RDW's close-dated products are donated to the local Salvation Army or the area's food pantry.

When tornadoes pummeled their community's in Wadena, Minnesota, in June 2010, and Merrill, Wisconsin, April 2011, Russ Davis Wholesale made significant contributions to help with the clean up and rebuilding efforts.

Russ Davis Wholesale has proudly served their great customers in the upper Midwest for over 55 years. They own and manage the entire process to ensure the highest quality produce. ■