

SOCIETY NEWS

flavorchemist.org



President's Message

Marissa Piazza
2026-2027

"Hello friends!... keeping this short and sweet (and maybe a bit salty!) 😊

I'm so grateful to be writing this to you all as we enter our 2026-2027 year and my term as president!

A few things I've learned in our awesome industry... stay focused, stay excited, keep your passion and drive going, respect every colleague you encounter, build off one another's strengths and gifts, hone in on your communication skills, aim to win but be ready to fail; fail with grace, stay humble, be confident, and support and encourage others to strive!

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I look forward to keeping our Society flourishing and having some fun with you all this year!

God bless and let the fun begin!

Marissa

SFC President 2026-2027

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2026-2027

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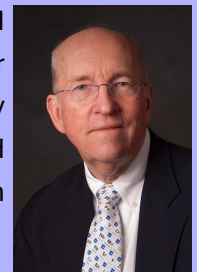
Cynthia (Cyndie) Lipka

Reflections Of A Retired Flavorist



So, if anyone would have told me 40 years ago that I would be writing my professional memoirs, I would have laughed. And yet, here we are. I can write about anything I want they said. So, I will relay some of my story and then end with some advice for the youth who will carry on in this most fascinating of careers.

I was working at Hershey Foods, minding my own business when someone by the name of Joan (Johnson) Harvey left the itty-bitty flavor group headed by Kent Zeller. Well, as George Thorogood and the Delaware Destroyers once sang; “That don’t befront me”. But actually, it did. And in the biggest way possible. Shortly thereafter, I was transferred from the Ingredient Research Group where I worked with engineers and scientists to modernize the process for making Hershey’s chocolate into Kent’s itty bitty flavor group. This was not welcome news. Nothing against Kent. I only knew of him to say “hi” in the hallway and he seemed like a normal nice mild-mannered guy. But it was around the time when I was ready for a promotion to Senior Research Scientist. Hershey was very degree-oriented company. I only had my BS. Tons of MS and PhDs worked there especially from Penn State. And starting in Kent’s group meant that I was going to start at the very bottom



Of the career ladder.....basically in a technician’s role. In those days, corporations did what they wanted to you. They would pick you up and plunk you down wherever they needed. And I found out that all of this was happening in a Tech Center meeting with all two hundred fifty something employees present. No advance warning. After the meeting, I went to Kent’s office to talk to him and get an understanding of what this all meant. I’m not sure I absorbed a thing.

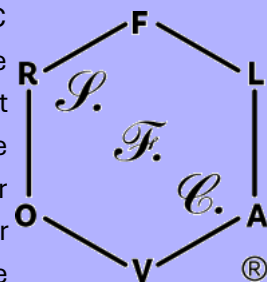
Our lab was the size of a small closet, sort of set up like a galley kitchen. Two benches on either wall with a center aisle. And a door that closed to keep those smells in. Eventually, Hershey put on an addition to the building where we got an actual lab with two offices, a giant lab and a lab robot.



As you might imagine, there was a quite a kerfuffle when Joan left. They did not allow Kent to carry on and train as he had initially. Kent used to hold twice weekly sessions including raw material evaluation when he was training Joan. He wasn’t allowed to devote that kind of time to me. I had to learn on the fly. And there was no one at Hershey who could stop my learning. To be honest they didn’t try. But it was a bit of a secret to one particular director.....

I was responsible for sourcing the raw materials that were used for creation and also manufacturing. This may be where my love affair with the raw materials began. Rooted in my very beginning. Kent was the very best example of a mentor that I can think of. You have likely heard me wax poetic about him when he received the Golden Blotter Award last May and so I won't go into all the details.

Time passed, and soon it was over 5 years. And then one day, Kent and I attended an SFC meeting in Newark. And I took my apprentice test. I can remember him quizzing me all the way there. He had asked me one question about raspberry but in my nervousness, I couldn't think of the right word and used the word lones. "lones?? lones?? What the hell are those??" was his reply! I can still hear him. Needless to say, I never got that word wrong ever again! I was quizzed by someone from Gallo and I couldn't tell you who else and I remember only one question about how to make a chocolate flavor and that's about it. No lones were involved! But I did well enough for them to ask how many years I'd been doing this work. The answer was 6. They told me to go away and when I hit 7 years to simply apply for an upgrade to Certified status, and that there was no need to re-test. Groovy. Big smile.



In the meantime, I was working diligently with Kent on sourcing raw materials and working with the Chemical Sources Association on the manufacture of commercially unavailable raw materials. In those days, I was only serving on the committee. But was nominated to become an official board member.

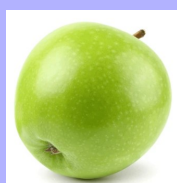
Anyway, back at Hershey, more time went by and suddenly I'm fully certified and here comes different food companies sneaking into the building at night. What the heck? Rumors ran wild! Who is buying us? What will happen to the flavor group? What about me? I was a single mom with 3 kids and needed to work. So, I began to look for a new position.

And I found one in Chicago, at Wrigley. The irony is that Wrigley was the company sneaking in at night to see the facilities and they were the top bidder for the acquisition of Hershey. It never happened as you know, and was due to some intricacies of Hershey Foods' role in the Milton Hershey School. I joked one time to William Wrigley Jr. that he wanted to have me as an employee by hook or by crook! If they can't buy the company I work for, they will simply hire me! lol

WRIGLEY'S

That is what brought me from south central PA to the Chicago suburbs. Wrigley was a bit of a difficult place for me to work. There were so many internal politics and strife. Every 6 months they would re-organize and I kept getting a new boss. It's a process trying to demonstrate your skill set to a new boss at a consumer product company who may have no understanding of what all is involved with being a flavor chemist and may not even have any regard for what was involved. This was not their first rodeo with flavorists as they had Bill Jaggard working there for some time.

Nothing was left of Bill's lab when I got there. And after some time, I was granted one technician, Marcia Petit who was a great help to me. We wound up sourcing 97% of all the commercially available raw materials! It is



possible that they wondered how efficient it was to have an internal flavorist after they had instituted a core supplier program. I had developed a green apple flavor that they really liked. I had to supply my formula (My!) to each of the four suppliers and they were to replicate the profile and provide pricing. No one could match it either in profile or cost. One company stated that it was simply too expensive to make it, and made their own substitutions.

I wound up leaving Wrigley when I hit my 5th boss in 3+ years and landed at a tiny little place called Sethness Greenleaf. At one time it was related to Sethness Caramel Color but the Sethness family split the business into two pieces. By the time I worked there, it was run by Barry McRaith who co-owned it with a friend of his who was his silent partner. Barry ran the show. There was a total of 41 employees there. No real politics involved. The only other person who worked on flavors was Bill Aslanides. He was in charge of the lab which included two QC technicians. Years later, one of the technicians went on to Sensient to train and become a flavorist ~ Sally Domingo. It was a beautiful place to work – not physically because it was a stinky old building in a not very nice Chicago neighborhood. But it was easy. People were nice and as a part of my benefits, they provided me with a car including all my gas. This was great because my commute was about 40 miles.



In those days, I did some writing for Perfumer & Flavorist magazine providing brief snippets of information about lesser-known raw materials. I was still on the Chem Sources Board and eventually served as president twice. I discovered that I did not suffer from fear of public speaking. I rather enjoyed it.



One day, I received a phone call from Jack Fastag who told me that the SFC was impressed with what I had done for the CSA Board. They wanted to know if I would be interested in serving on their Board. That would mean giving up CSA and then would dedicate 5 years to the SFC Board. I needed to think about it because I really loved my role in CSA. And I had served with them for seventeen years. These were good friends and pals that all collaborated together.



During my time at Sethness, I met the renowned Judy Michalski at a Cubs rooftop event. She had taken over the column “Organoleptic Characteristics of Flavor Materials” from Gerry Mosciano as the lead. And I wanted desperately to participate in her panel. I believe that I simply asked her if I could help with the panel. She graciously admitted me! I’ll always be indebted to her for that, because I simply loved it.

Obviously, I took the chance to be on the SFC Board. But not before I was interviewed by those on the membership committee and ok’d by them. My first role was for Treasurer. My predecessor told me it was really easy. So easy, in fact that his wife did it for him! Well, I didn’t have a wife and I had to do it myself and it was painful to manage all the records for such a large group with assets over \$100,000 in checking, savings, bonds and a PayPal account tracking every single transaction. UGH! Not my strong suit. Or my source of joy, that’s for sure.





Soon, I was VP and the following year was a Symposium year. And the person who was in charge of working with the hotels and managing the reservations needed to step away for personal reasons. I remember the President of the SFC calling me up and saying “The symposium is next year when you are President. You need to step up and fill this role”. So, I did. I learned much about the hotel industry that I will never use again and I am grateful for that!

My presidency came and I worked hard to have engaging speakers and relevant topics. I even arranged a trip to Rick Bayless’s organic garden with a tour from his private gardener. This was followed by a luncheon at Topolobampo in his exclusive kitchen. There was maybe 15 or so of us. They mix a mean margarita. What a great time that was!



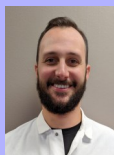
Most will assure you that your fifth year on the board as Chairman is an easy ride, sort of acting like a guide to the board helping them out with information and history they might not have been aware of. And that is basically true. The leadership for SFC pretty much comes from the President.





I found a new home at Bell Flavors and Fragrances which was also a long commute, another 40 miles. Sigh. I actually worked with Judy for some years there which made participation in her panels easy. But then she left and went to a different flavor house. I remained at Bell for a while and then was lured away to take a chance on being a manager. I love people, and I love teaching people, what could go wrong?

I took a spot at Prinova Flavors as the manager of the group. They wanted to get rid of the former manager, and they did so after a bit. The group was small – boutique is the word that they used. But the staff was not receptive to me or my experience and resented me for ‘replacing’ the old manager. I literally observed him chasing a young girl through the lab for fun! In a lab! With chemicals and glassware and stuff! {eye roll}



I had to fire people and I hated that. It's very stressful. Then my boss was fired. That was stressful and a new guy took over. And that was even more stressful. Then my partner; all around favorite guy ever (Bernie) passed away during my time there as well. I couldn't think straight. I couldn't be my best. And by that time, I had two great, and I mean really great trainees: Alex Amann and Rachel Odolski. I hated it but I needed to leave and go someplace where I could just be a bench flavorist. The only thing I ever really wanted.



I wound up going back to Bell. It was during my tenure there that Judy retired from Allured's P&F column and gifted it to me. Well, she actually recommended me as her replacement. And boy, wasn't that the best time? I loved it so much. Knowing these raw materials and how they perform is the core of our existence isn't it? And I used them, these oddballs, these obscure materials as much as I could if it made the flavor better. By better, I mean more realistic; three dimensional and elegant. I dislike those flavors that rely on single materials to carry the majority of a flavor profile. To me, it's sort of like a cheat and is lazy. Like an excess of vanillin for instance. I honed my skills to the point where even if I read an article that spoke to raw materials, I could smell them in my mind. I'm not sure if everyone possesses this skill, I've never discussed it with anyone.



And for two luscious years, I had the ability to run a raw material workshop with a live audience at FlavorCon. It was a Master Class. This gave me exposure to people I didn't know from across the globe. And when people volunteered their perspectives on the raw materials I chose to present, it simply made my heart sing. This! This collaborative work is eye-opening and revealing.



Bell felt like home until then it didn't. And that was when I retired. It's been a bit over a year now. I am grateful every single day for where I am. And thank you for persevering through this long story.



And my advice to the youth out there?

Learn all the raw materials you can. The onus is on you. If you don't have someone to lead you in this, then do it yourself or with others. This is the life's blood of your role. Know the good, the bad and of course the ugly because Mother Nature doesn't only have good scents. There are stinkers out there which will take

your flavor to the next level. Maintain good records of what you observe. Use whatever means you need to, in order to create the best reference or database you can. No one at any company can prevent you from learning. Do it.

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Understand what makes one oil source different from a different oil source. Let's say we are looking at citrus oils. How does the process affect the overall flavor profile? Same for vanilla extracts. Do they use whole beans, splits, or cuts? Hot water to process or cold? All these things matter.

Don't copy someone else's formula!

Don't copy someone else's formula! Even with that small tweak, the Original Creator will know. And that OC will absolutely lose respect for you and your capabilities and ethics. And may inform others. Be good to yourself and stand on your own merits. Imagine someone complementing you on a great flavor when all you did was change the ethyl butyrate from 0.05 to 0.06. Well done mate.

Go to as many meetings as you can. Meet people. Be kind to them. Be helpful. Be a great team member. None of this is possible without the rest of the team, most especially including production staff. Be a good human.

Okay, I am done. Thanks for sticking with me. I appreciate you all. It's more of a historical perspective on this is the life of Cyndie. If you want to get in touch, email me at cynthia.lipka@yahoo.com. ❖❖❖







2026 ANNUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

May 4-6 | Ponte Vedra Inn & Club | Ponte Vedra, FL



SFC well-represented at the ALC. Left to right: Justin Kozlowski (Bell Flavors), Greg Griffin (Brookside Flavors), Dolf DeRovira (Flavor Dynamics), Charlie Iker (Kerry), Jennifer Augelli (Givaudan), Shelley Kung (IFF), Elsa Howerth (Kerry), Michelle Huber (Symrise).





Women in Flavor & Fragrance Commerce

2026 Annual Recognition Awards Dinner

June 18, 2026, Jersey City, NJ



Eliana Nogueira

Takasago International

WFFC 2026 Flavorist Recognition Award

Every year the Women in Flavor & Fragrance Commerce (WFFC) illuminates four women in the flavor and fragrance industry with recognition awards for excellence and contribution in their respective fields— The Flavorist Recognition Award, The Perfumer Recognition Award, The Innovation Recognition Award, and The Leadership Recognition Award. This year, SFC member, Eliana Nogueira of Takasago, was honored with the Flavorist Recognition Award.

Leading the North American Sweet Flavor Creation team, Eliana Nogueira is the Director of Flavor Creation and a Senior Flavorist at Takasago International Corp. USA. In this role, she combines visionary strategy with effective leadership, and hands-on creative expertise to drive innovation across sweet goods and beverage applications.

Leveraging an academic background in Industrial Chemistry (B.S.) and a specialization in Food Science and Technology from the University of Campinas (UNICAMP), she has extensive expertise developed over 28 years of experience in the flavor industry.

WFFC Flavorist Recognition Award

SFC Member Past Recipients

- 2014 Karen Alexander (IFF) & Marie Wright (Wild Flavors)
- 2015 Tony Moore (Flavor Producers)
- 2016 Alpa Roman (FFS)
- 2017 Cynthia Lipka (Prinova)
- 2018 Kathi Sparks (ADM)
- 2019 Kay Murano (IFF)
- 2022 Elsa Howerth (Kerry)
- 2023 Alison Freedman (dsm-Firmenich)
- 2024 Deborah Barber (McCormick)



Her flavorist journey began at SKW/Degussa Brazil, where she received strong foundational training under the mentorship of experienced industry professionals. During this time, she progressed from Junior Flavorist to Flavorist, building deep expertise in confectionery and beverage applications.

Her Takasago career began in 2005 in Sao Paulo Brazil, where she focused on developing flavors for the South American market, working across confectionery, oral care, dairy, and beverage categories. Her technical knowledge was impacted by her diverse Global background, having trained in five distinct international markets including Brazil, Mexico, Japan, India, and the United States. These experiences broadened her technical knowledge, cultural perspective, and creative approach.

In 2018, she relocated to the United States to join Takasago's North American team, where she successfully contributed to key commercial wins across multiple product categories. In 2023, she was appointed Director of Flavor Creation for North America, assuming responsibility for the Sweet Goods and Beverage segments.

Eliana is deeply passionate about flavor creation and innovation. Throughout her career, she has been fortunate to learn from generous, kind, and highly inspiring mentors who shaped not only her technical skills but also the leader she is today. She strives to lead with passion, kindness, and determination, balancing her own creative work with a strong commitment to mentoring and developing the next generation of flavorists at Takasago.

Eliana has been a certified member since 2015.



The evening was beautiful in Jersey City. The weather was perfect. The venue was beautiful with the view of NY city skyline. As it always is with the WFFC, the event was classy and well-attended by members and guests beaming with excitement for the honorees. It could not have been lovelier for such an occasion with the ambience of summery days ahead.





Several Society members were in attendance to celebrate Eliana.



Annual Meeting & Awards Dinner

480th Business Meeting

May 7, 2026

Marriott Hotel, Newark, NJ



President Scott Michaluk's last board of directors meeting.

The meeting met quorum of over 30 Certified members in person and online in attendance via Zoom. President Scott Michaluk called the meeting to order.



At the start of our annual business meetings, we hold a one-minute moment of silence to give a silent tribute to our deceased members. This year we lost three members who have given significant contribution to the Society.

Silent Tribute



Dr. Sindgi Dattu Sastry
1942 – 2025
Jogue Scholarship Donor



Frank Fischetti
1935 – 2025
Past President 1983-1984



Alfred Goossens
1939 – 2026
Past President 1979-1980

The Membership Committee Chair, Jacqueline Finner presented one member for upgrade for voting, Richelle Yacon of Embassy Flavors in Canada. Angel Wong of Embassy Flavors, her mentor, spoke on her behalf.





Members exuberantly and unanimously voted for the new slate of officers.



SFC Chairperson, Justin Kozlowski, congratulated Scott Michaluk for a job well done during his term as President and presented him with the president's plaque. Scott went on to give a brief year-in-review.

Passing the gavel. Outgoing President, Scott Michaluk, passed the gavel to incoming President, Marissa Piazza.



Meet the new SFC Secretary, Katie Beaver. Katie has been a certified member since 2019. She had been a Scholarship Committee Chair. She currently works for McCormick.



2026-2027 BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Chairperson Scott Michaluk, President Marissa Piazza, Vice President Jennifer Tartaglia, Treasurer Terry Miesle, and Secretary Katie Beaver.





The largest attendance by past presidents in a business meeting in recent years!

Kent Zeller (1986), Mike Fasano (1999), Joan Harvey (2003 & 2007), Mariano Gascon (2006), Gary Raab (2012), Hedy Kulka (2013), Deborah Osborne (2016), Elsa Howerth (2019), Chris Williams (2021), Cathianne Leonardi (2022), Bill Aslanides (2023), Justin Kozlowski (2024), Scott Michaluk (2025), Marissa Piazza (2026).







2026 Dr. S. Dattu Sastry Scholarship

SUMANJOT KAUR



Sumanjot Kaur is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Food Science at the University of Arkansas. She earned her bachelor's in food technology from Punjab Agricultural University in 2021 and completed her master's in food science at the University of Arkansas in 2023. She is working on improving the quality of soy ingredients using supercritical carbon dioxide technology. Suman has received 22 awards at regional, national, and international levels including highest student honor "Thomas H. Smouse Fellowship and Honored Student Award" at American Oil Chemists' Society (AOCS), Dale Bumpers Distinguished Scholar PhD and outstanding PhD student award from University of Arkansas. She has published 10+ peer-reviewed papers in food science and ingredient systems and completed internship in Kerry Ingredients helping leading clean-label antioxidant projects with direct commercial applications. Beyond her scholarly achievements, Sumanjot is deeply committed to academic leadership and professional service, actively contributing as an at-large representative for her college and Graduate Student Representative for the Ozark Section of the Institute of Food Technologists. Through these roles, she has demonstrated strong leadership, collaboration, and communication skills while supporting student representation and advancing professional dialogue within the food science community. Her scholarly achievements, impactful research, and continuous service reflect a clear dedication to develop innovative solutions to address global food system challenges.



Member Awards



Hedy Kulka receiving her 25-yr pin

Year 2000 brought the largest influx of new members into the Society. This year we are awarding their membership anniversaries:

- 16 25-year membership pin
- 4 50-yr membership award
- Golden Blotter Award



David Maine receiving his 25-yr pin



Jenine Soto receiving her 25-yr pin



Barbara Taylor receiving her 50-yr award



Kent Zeller receiving his 50-yr award



25-year Membership Pin Award



Susan Bautista
SoRSE Technology



Alexander Castro
IFF



Hedy Kulka
McCormick
Past President 2013-2014



Leslie Lepore
Kalsec



Cynthia Lipka
Emeritus
Past President 2014-2015



David Maine
Sensient



Robert Maksym
Emeritus



Glenn Mangarelli
Lucta



Sherry Mills
Givaudan



25-year Membership Pin Award



Carol Nieman
Refined Taste Consulting



Brett Pullins
MANE



Jenine Soto
Symrise



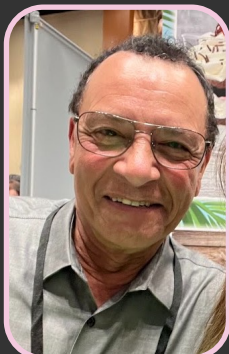
Frank Tangel
Emeritus



Pei-fen Wu
Emeritus



John Yurecko
Emeritus



Monir Zakhary
Essential Taste



50-year Membership Award



James Etheridge
Emeritus



Barbara Taylor
Emeritus



Agneta Weisz
Emeritus



Kent Zeller
Kent Zeller Flavor Consulting
Past President 1986-1987



Chairperson, Justin Kozlowski, selected Joan Harvey for the 2026 Golden Blotter Award. He spoke very highly of Joan and showed a slide presentation of Joan's vast involvement and contribution to the SFC and the flavor industry. Elsa Howerth spoke about her admiration for Joan's volunteerism early on in her career and how she has been a role model for her. Joan's mentor, Kent Zeller, spoke of Joan's impressive career.



Joan Harvey receiving the Gold Blotter Award from Justin Kozlowski



Golden Blotter Award



JOAN HARVEY

Joan's career and flavor industry involvement

- President, The Society of Flavor Chemists (SFC) 2002-2003, 2007-2008
- Board of Directors, The Society of Flavor Chemists (SFC)
- Membership Committee Chair, The Society of Flavor Chemists (SFC)
- Sponsorship Committee Chair, The Society of Flavor Chemists (SFC)
- Newsletter Chair, The Society of Flavor Chemists (SFC)
- President, Chemical Sources Association
- Poundage Survey Subcommittee Chair, FEMA
- Scientific Affairs Committee Vice-Chair, FEMA
- SVP General Manager, Flavors, Bell Flavors & Fragrances





New Members & Upgrades

Welcome & Congratulations!



My name is Richelle and I graduated from the University of Guelph in Canada with a bachelor's degree in food science in 2015. Shortly after graduating, I started my flavor journey with Embassy Ingredients in the Quality Assurance department. My curiosity with flavors and how they were developed has urged me to apply to the company's flavor lab a year later. From there my passion for developing flavors had become to blossom! I'm fortunate to have found a career that allows me blend science and art to bring flavors to life. When I'm not on the bench, I enjoy collecting cookbooks and trying new recipes, and spending time with family along with friendly board game competition. I'm also happiest when I'm enjoying nature (sun, rain, or snow!) with my husband and our dog, Mochi.

RICHELLE YACON

Embassy Ingredients Ltd

Upgraded to Certified

May 7, 2026

Committee News

Volunteer Opportunities!

If interested in joining any of the committees, please contact the committee Chair listed.



COMMITTEES

2026-2027

ARRANGEMENTS

CHAIR: [Chris Williams](#)

AUDIT

CHAIR: [Paul Ricciardi](#)

BY-LAWS

CHAIR: [Mariano Gascon](#)

HISTORY

CHAIR: [Sharon Tortola](#)

LIBRARY

CHAIR: [Sam Tharpe](#)

MEDIA

CHAIR: [Alison Freedman](#)

MEMBERSHIP

CO-CHAIRS: [Jacqueline Finner](#)

[Ashley Rizzo](#)

PROGRAM-CHICAGO

CO-CHAIRS: [Greg Griffin &](#)

[Lauren Hammerschmidt](#)

PROGRAM-MIDWEST

CHAIR: [Katie Crowley](#)

PROGRAM-EAST COAST

CHAIR: [Kim Bendickson](#)

[Tara Strober](#)

PROGRAM-WEST COAST

CHAIR: [Alex Scott](#)

NOMINATION

CHAIR: [Scott Michaluk](#)

RECOGNITION

CHAIR: [Mary Robertson](#)

SCHOLARSHIP

CHAIR: [Alex Amann](#)

SPONSORSHIP

CHAIR: [Alpa Roman](#)

SYMPOSIUM

CHAIR: [Shelley Kung](#)

WEBSITE

CHAIR: [Elsa Howerth](#)



Calendar

The following are the 2026-2027 SFC Meetings planned. Please be sure to book your hotel reservations and register for the meetings before the cut-off dates. See [SFC website calendar](#) for details and updates.

September 30, 2026 -- East Coast Meeting in Rutherford, NJ

November 3, 2026 -- CSA Chicago Roundtable in Chicago, IL

January 19, 2027 -- West Coast Meeting in Orange, CA

February 19, 2027 -- East Coast Meeting in Lakeland, FL

March 2, 2027 -- SFC/CSA/NAFFS West Coast Roundtable in Anaheim, CA

April 15, 2027 -- Midwest Meeting in Cincinnati, OH

May 6, 2027 -- CSA Roundtable and SFC Annual Meeting & Awards Dinner in Newark, NJ



Editor's Note If you would like to share an article, announcement, and /or message relevant to our members, and any questions, suggestions, or feedback, please contact Elsa Howerth at elsa.howerth@kerry.com