

# Regional Voice

Of the Natural Products Industry

Natural  
Products  
ASSOCIATION™  
e a s t  
Spring 2008

## Face-to-Face Meeting with Albany Legislators Sets Stage for Further Discussions on Harmful Industry Bills

On February 6, 2008, NPA East President Andy Fox and Executive Director Paul Kushner as well as representatives from our New York State lobbyists, Hill and Gosdeck, met with key legislators and/or their staffs in Albany. Among the full day's highlights was an in-depth meeting with Assemblyman Felix Ortiz, the co-sponsor of several bills which NPA East opposes due to the expected negative impact on retailers and manufacturers selling vitamins and supplements in New York State. One would create a mini-FDA in New York State, while another would mandate special labeling for dietary supplements sold only in New York State. While Assemblyman Ortiz is not inclined to withdraw the bills, we learned that his main concern rests with the FDA and its inability to enforce existing laws, and not solely with our industry. In fact, he recently played a major role in the development of a Naturopathic school in a major hospital in Puerto Rico. Assemblyman Ortiz also uses dietary supplements regularly and believes strongly in their efficacy. These conversations with Mr. Ortiz present an opportunity for meaningful dialogue with him never before available to our association and our industry. The fact that we were able to meet with him personally, is just one indication among many we experienced in Albany regarding the value of employing an organization with the lobbying experience of Hill and Gosdeck.

After our visit with Mr. Ortiz, we met with Senator Cesar Trunzo's Research Director Steve Guerin, who assured us that the Senator will continue to support our industry's view of these bills and oppose any legislation that could eliminate jobs in New York State.

Our lobbyists also secured six additional meetings for us including a conversation with John Kraigenow, Senator Kenneth LaValle's Counsel. Senator LaValle is the sponsor of two companion bills in the NY Senate (to the Ortiz bills introduced in the Assembly). Although Senator LaValle believes strongly in the merit of the bills, Mr. Kraigenow remembered clearly the grassroots response via letters from constituents opposing the special labeling bill that his office had received which were still in his file. This was a tangible indication of the value of our grassroots efforts to affect legislation harmful to our industry.

We also had productive conversations with two other trade associations, the New York State Retail Council and the Food Industry Alliance of New York State. It was recognized that there is overlap among our memberships and common views on several issues. We plan to work with these organizations in the future on any legislation that affects our constituent groups.

Later in the day, we had a very substantive meeting with Monica Miller, a member of Assemblyman Richard Gottfried's Counsel on Dietary Supplements and a former lobbyist for DSHEA in the 1990s. As Chair of the Assembly Health Committee, Assemblyman Gottfried has oversight for the "mini-FDA legislation" in his committee.

The next meeting was with Elizabeth Colombo, Assistant Counsel to Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno. The Majority Leader's office has significant influence on the calendar of the bills coming before the Senate if they have passed out of Committee.

The final meeting of the day was with Michael DeMartino, Counsel to Senator Charles Fuschillo. Senator Fuschillo is the Chair of the Senate's Consumer Protection Committee which has oversight for the bills introduced by Senator LaValle in the Senate.

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## Natural Products Association Holds 11th Annual Natural Products Day

On April 8, the Natural Products Association hosted its 11th annual lobbying event in Washington, D.C. Natural Products Day is designed to educate members of Congress about the role natural products and dietary supplements play in keeping Americans healthy and the public benefits of preventive care, with the aim of broadening the industry's base of political support. Industry members visited their legislators' congressional offices to discuss key legislation affecting the natural products industry. The turnout to lobby was stronger than ever as nearly 200 industry members attended the event.

This year's Natural Products Day focused its efforts around the Child Nutrition Promotion and School Lunch Protection Act of 2007,

proposed by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA). Participants also conveyed the association's opposition to legislation limiting the availability of the popular dietary supplement DHEA. Additionally, the lobbying event was expanded to include an evening cruise along the Potomac on a yacht the Monday evening before the lobbying event.

Natural Products Day featured a morning briefing and training session with association and government relations experts to teach participants about the best ways to communicate with legislators, and provide information on key legislation. Following afternoon appointments, participants attended an evening reception honoring legislators who have supported initiatives important to the natural products industry.

## Highlights of NPA East's 4th Annual Education Day

As a prelude to Natural Products Lobby Day, this year's participants in NPA East's fourth annual Education Day had the unique opportunity to exchange real life business experiences with fellow retailers, suppliers, and manufacturers. Taking advantage of the round table format, attendees had a lively discussion focused on methods for running a profitable business in challenging times.

The theme for this year's event was *Minding Your Business: Making Your Marketing, Staff and Store Work as Hard as You*. Topics covered included how to Effectively Market Your Store; Staff Training, Education, and the Bottom Line; and Planning for Success: Creating Your Optimum Store Business Model.

The three moderators began with a 15-minute introduction, followed by a 30-minute round table discussion on the topic, and a 10-minute summary and review of the issues. Each round table was hosted by a current member of the NPA East Board of Directors, and active participation ensued.

Some of the ideas and suggestions made during the round tables were so valuable and, in many cases, easy to implement, they are worth repeating here. One participant talked about the importance of maintaining margins in the face of price increases from suppliers and manufacturers. Even slight adjustments that keep margins constant resulted in significant increases in margin dollars, year after year. Another participant suggested a

way to lower bank service charges by running debit card sales through the store's system as credit card payments. It doesn't affect the customer, but, in his experience credit card processing charges can be far lower than debit card charges.

Those in attendance agreed that this type of hands-on event is extremely valuable to retailers who often feel isolated in their stores and rarely have the opportunity to share in what all believed was a useful exchange of ideas. It was agreed that more of these face-to-face gatherings would be extremely useful for retailers, and President Andy Fox and the NPA East Board of Directors plan to look at the viability of holding more round table venues during the year.

## Retailer Spotlight

By Bob Kleszics

Like many of the people who work in the natural products industry, Richmond, VA retailer Donnie Caffery didn't grow up in a household with particularly healthy eating habits. In fact, says Caffery, "my diet was horrible. We didn't eat fruits or vegetables. I didn't even have cantaloupe or watermelon for the first time until I was in college."

After graduating from Washington and Lee University with a business degree, Caffery started his first business—an Orowheat bread route in Roanoke, VA. In addition to his supermarket accounts, Caffery also

dropped off the bakery's more natural offerings, such as Branola bread, to a handful of natural foods stores and co-ops. "I was always intrigued by the passion and philosophy of those little stores," Caffery remembers. He also began to appreciate the connection between good food and better health—especially in reducing the symptoms of a lifetime of allergies.

In 1979, Caffery opened a small thrift store to sell the day-old bread from his route. It wasn't long before he turned half of the space into his first natural foods store. By 1981, Caffery and his wife, commercial artist Angie Wiggins, had returned to his hometown of New Orleans. There he opened a 600 square-foot shop called All Natural Foods,

which doubled in size by the time he sold it in 1984. Those were the days of 100-hour workweeks, remembers Caffery, adding, "but I had a blast." It was at that store that Caffery began raising the bar on the retailing of natural foods and supplements by setting high standards that continue to this day.

Goods Foods Grocery was born in 1985 after Caffery and his wife moved back to Virginia. The Richmond natural products store was one of the first in the country to utilize scanning. Good Foods Grocery was also on the crest of the wave that swept through the natural products industry in the mid-to-late 1980s—cleaner, brighter more professionally run stores that also stressed exceptional customer service.

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**SAVE THESE DATES:  
OCTOBER 15-18, 2008  
BOSTON CONVENTION & EXHIBIT CENTER**

**Join Us at Natural Products Expo East  
The Premier Educational Event Designed Exclusively  
for Independent Retailers**

Natural Products Expo East—held for the first time in Boston, MA this October 15-18, 2008—is just what independent retailers need in today's competitive economy. More than 1,100 companies will grace the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center's show floor, offering the largest and best-selling collection of healthy, natural, and organic products and branded ingredients you'll find anywhere on the East Coast. The show floor experience is enhanced with education and networking events to offer a well-rounded business opportunity.

Keynote Speaker Frances Moore Lappé is the author of the bestseller *Diet for a Small Planet* and recently *Getting a Grip*. In her keynote address, Lappé will stress how her *Diet for a Small Planet* philosophy remains valid, and how food remains the central issue through which to understand world politics. Featured Speaker Jason Dorsey will delve deeper into the insights shared in *Gen Y @ Work – An Insider's Guide to Retaining and Motivating Generation Y* and address your business concerns pertaining to this perplexing issue.

The Wednesday Retailer Workshop, a full-day of education one day before the show floor opens, provides category buyers and managers direct interaction as they receive focused, intensive training and advice from industry experts and peers. Included this year is an advanced retailer track focused on the challenges faced by experienced store owners. The workshop opens with "The One Minute Manager" featuring Victoria Halsey and closes with ZingTrain's "Creating a Vision of Greatness." **The cost for this workshop is \$75 for NPA East members and \$95 for non-members.**

The Seaport World Trade Center, located within two blocks walking distance of the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, plays host to the Organic Harvest Festival. The outdoor festival, complete with live music and organic food and drinks, features certified organic tabletop exhibits and *The Natural Foods Merchandiser* Spirit of Organic Awards presentation recognizing "heroes" of the organic community with a determination to change the way we farm, eat, and live.

Education and networking opportunities continue offsite to local destinations throughout Boston. These include the Organic Farm Tour of Decas Botanical Synergies and the Retail Store Tour of Debra's Natural Gourmet, Cambridge Naturals, and Pemberdon Farms on Wednesday (\$60 each) and Thursday's Live Music Party with Galactic at Boston's famous Roxy Ballroom.

Registration for Natural Products Expo East is free for qualified retail buyers, brokers, and distributors until September 12, 2008.

Website: [www.expoeast.com](http://www.expoeast.com)

Call: 1.866.458.4935 or 1.303.390.1776

E-mail: [tradeshows@newhope.com](mailto:tradeshows@newhope.com)

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## **Retailer Spotlight**

"We wanted to make sure that everyone felt comfortable shopping in our store," says Caffery, who notes that in those early years the store's mission statement ran to eight pages. Though much shorter today the statement is read at the beginning of every staff meeting. "Our philosophy and integrity mean a lot," notes Caffery. "If something doesn't fit into our mission statement we don't do it." What is the mission statement? I'm dying to know?

Goods Foods Grocery's second location opened in 1993. The company continually works at improving both stores, which are 3,750 and 4,550 square feet, respectively. Recent improvements include new fixtures, energy-efficient lighting, and top-of-the-line POS systems.

Donnie Caffery approaches his thirty-year mark selling natural products with much gratitude. Caffery, who calls himself a professing Christian, says, "Not seeing how you are blessed is like going through life with blinders on." Caffery repays his blessings in many ways. During monthly Community Giving Days, five percent of the company's sales are donated to area non-profits. Caffery serves on his local community business board and has also served on the board of NPA East for the past eight years. He believes strongly in retailers advocating on behalf of the natural products industry on both the state and national level.

"There are times when I'm not sure where this industry is going," notes Caffery, "but success will come from adhering to our core philosophy. I'm so delighted to take what I've got and continue to improve on it." Wise advice for anyone in our industry.

**For information on how to get personally involved in fighting for your rights, please contact our Executive Director, Paul Kushner at 856.985.5446 or e-mail Paul at [pkushner@comcast.net](mailto:pkushner@comcast.net). You also can go directly to the NPA East website ([www.npaeast.org](http://www.npaeast.org)) and click on the **Take Action** button at the top of the home page.**

## Board of Directors

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# Join the Natural Products Industry at the Natural Products Association's 71st Annual Convention and Trade Show

## Thursday, July 17 - Saturday, July 19

## Sands Expo and Convention Center

## The Venetian Resort and Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada

Each year, more than 7,500 natural products industry retailers, suppliers, and professionals gather at Natural MarketPlace to connect with colleagues and friends, discover thousands of new products for stores and businesses, and learn from leading experts. With a trade show floor featuring nearly 500 booths filled with the latest natural products and services, plus this highly-rated educational program and special events and activities, Natural MarketPlace 2008 is a powerful learning, growth and networking opportunity.

### At Natural MarketPlace 2008 you will:

#### Connect with People

Network with your fellow retailers and other natural products professionals. Exchange ideas and socialize with colleagues and friends.

#### Connect with Products

More than 450 exhibitors will be featured on the trade show floor, with their latest and greatest products. Be the first to see the newest innovations. Our buyer-friendly show floor makes it easy for you to get to know the leading industry suppliers and build long-term business relationships.

#### Connect with Knowledge

Join the industry's thought-leaders as they present seminars and workshops that will help you run smart businesses. Sessions will help you improve and expand your store and business and understand the latest industry trends and health innovations.

To register and for more information go to <http://www.naturalproductsassoc.org>



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