



# The Fire Inside

"TO IGNITE AND INSPIRE PASSION  
IN EVERYTHING WE DO"

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

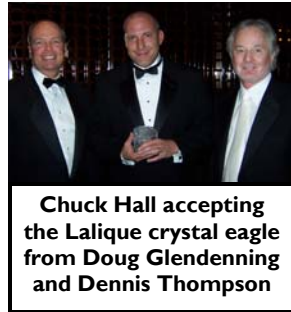
APRIL/MAY 2006

MARIE COLLINS—EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

MCOLLINS@FIREBIRDSRESTAURANTS.COM

## Burning You Up! - by Rob Kendall and Doug Glendenning

The Managing Partners have just returned from an operations review meeting in Las Vegas where we recognized and rewarded Chuck Hall as the Managing Partner of 2005. Not only was Chuck awarded with an all expense paid vacation to a destination of his choice, a lovely piece of Beya jewelry for his wife Leslie, but also a beautiful Lalique crystal eagle. Why an eagle? The eagle is a symbol of great strength and "Eagles don't flock"; you only find them one at a time. They are majestic and rare and if you have the opportunity to see them in the wild, they will take your breath away. Chuck Hall



**Chuck Hall accepting the Lalique crystal eagle from Doug Glendenning and Dennis Thompson**

and Team StoneCrest's collective performance has been award winning. As the fictitious character Gordon Gecko from Wall Street said, "It's all about the bucks kid, everything else is just conversation."

In other words, profit is the result of a leader and their respective teams' performance. Congratulations!

Looking to the future, Sara For-gash and team are now on site at Northlake mall interviewing and hiring for a mid-April opening. We know that Sara and team will have much satisfaction in their selection and training of the new team. This satisfaction is known as PRIDE. We only get one opportunity to make that great first impression with our guests.

Construction at Collierville, TN is currently on schedule. Mike

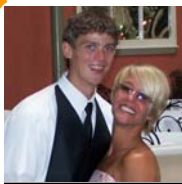
Corder and team will go on-site in May. We are scheduled for a mid-June opening.

In the weeks to follow you will have an opportunity to view a slide show that Mark Eason put together and shared with the Managing Partners at the Las Vegas operations review meeting. It is evident that you have much PRIDE in how and what you do. Our desire is that you will see the PRIDE that your peers take at their respective restaurants and continue to raise the performance bar to new levels!! Thanks for all you do - it is allowing us to continue to grow the concept!

## What It Takes - by Charles Blankenship

So what does it take to become the Managing Partner of the Year? To gain such an award, the criteria includes: representing Firebirds Principles and Values, leading by example, developing people, manifesting interdependence, striving for continual improvement, demonstrating quality operations, delivering a strong financial performance, and igniting and inspiring passion and pride in himself/herself and others every day.

This year's celebration dinner was held at the SW Steakhouse located in the beautiful Wynn Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada during the first week of March 2006. Upon receiving the award, Chuck graciously accepted on behalf of the entire TEAM at StoneCrest. Chuck and TEAM StoneCrest distinguished themselves in 2005 by developing people, growing sales with outstanding operations and delivering a strong financial performance. Thanks to Chuck and TEAM for showing us what good performance looks like. Be sure to congratulate Chuck on being named the 2005 Firebirds Managing Partner of the Year.



**Jeff Crane and his bride-to-be, Suzi Dicus**

Changes in latitudes are in order for Jeff Crane. Jeff has recently become the Chef for Firebirds Birmingham. Jeff has worked with Firebirds and affiliated concepts for several years and has proven himself to be a talented chef with all the tools necessary to become one of the best in the business. Jeff and his significant other, Suzi Dicus, also have a wedding planned for late May of this year. So, Jeff has lots of reasons to celebrate. Congratulations Chef Jeff Crane.

On a special note, there have been two new additions to the Firebirds extended family in past weeks. Both Nate Buchanan (Raleigh) and Tim Haring (Raleigh 2) have become fathers. Nathan Jr. and Cooper Haring are giving the proud parents even more to smile about. Congratulations to you and your families.



On a comical note, a few of the staff at Firebirds StoneCrest thought it a great idea to give Scott Lackman a grand farewell when he left to work with the new Firebirds at Northlake Mall....with 2000 Post-It-Notes left on his car, Scott was the envy of any service manager! Best of luck at Northlake—Team StoneCrest.



# PRIDE Is Our Possession - by Mark Eason

As mentioned earlier, all of the Managing Partners, Market Partners, and some of the home office team met in Las Vegas to celebrate the winner of our Managing Partner of the Year award. Three of the four corporate partners were in attendance as well; Dennis Thompson, Doug Glendenning and Mark Wattles. A huge thank you goes out to them for their attendance and for hosting this event in the great city of Las Vegas. Everyone had a great time and it was appreciated by all who were there.

During one of the small meeting sessions we attended that week, I had the pleasure of speaking to the team and presenting a slide show simply titled – PRIDE. The dictionary defines PRIDE as a sense of one's own dignity or value, self respect, and satisfaction taken in achievement. Each restaurant has been given a copy of this presentation so that everyone can share in the accomplishments we have achieved so far. It is a compilation of pictures from each of the ten restaurants that make up the Firebirds chain. We all have something to be proud of in our restaurants, no matter how small. And if we were proud of every single detail, every employee, the way we take care of our guests, and on and on... How great would our company be? The ultimate test in PRIDE is to

have our guests want to be seen at Firebirds, and to bring their friends with them. Are they proud of us enough to make it their favorite restaurant? There is a sense of Pride that resides within them as well. So spread the word – PRIDE. It will be used a lot throughout the rest of

the year. Are you proud of where you work? Are you proud of the entrees you serve? Are you proud of your style of service? Are you proud of the last employee you hired or the way you interact with your employees and guests? I know that all of us at the home office

are! We are very proud of our managers and employees that serve our guests every single day, displaying a positive attitude and representing Firebirds in a courteous and professional manner. So remember this the next time you greet a guest, or do a check list, or hand a guest a menu, or serve a freshly cut slice of Prime Rib.....

**Pride is our Possession!**



**Smiles of PRIDE:** (Left to Right, Top to Bottom) Cheryl Hogan, Jim Cone, Tammy Treadway, Chuck Hall, Lisa Kozloff, Josh Snodgrass, Rita Bielecki, Kevin Drought, Steve Sturm, Mark Eason, Tyler Fray, Charles Blankenship, Gerald Pulsinelli, Doug Glendenning, Sara Forgash, Rob Kendall, Mike Corder, Todd Schroeffer, Steve Kislow, DJ Mariello, John Thomas, Marie Collins, Mark Rumscheidt, Travis Cherry and Dennis Thompson

## Hot Off The Grill - by Steve Sturm

Since I have been back in StoneCrest I have experienced the need to go back to the basics. What does that mean? Well, in simple terms it means "Serve Hot Food Hotter and Cold Food Colder." How do we do this? We begin with systems in place for starters. Next, we live the 3 secrets of the one

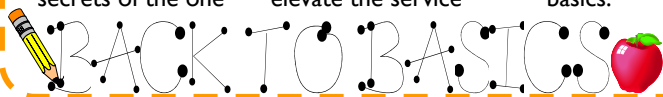
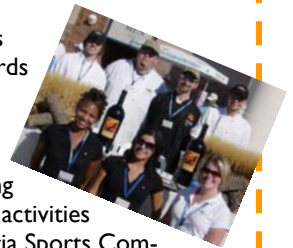
minute manager. We need to focus on over communicating through feedback. We should use feedback cards for a short period of time to bring the quantity and the quality of feedback to higher levels. We must be uncompromising with our line checks. When we are working the window we must elevate the service

mentality with our staff. There is nothing fancy about what we do. We cook great food, serve it graciously in a warm inviting atmosphere, and have PRIDE in our convictions to do just that. We need to continue to uncompliment our work and get back to the basics.

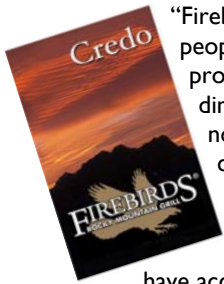
## For the Sports Fan...

Who was the MVP in not only the first NFL Super Bowl, but also the second? You guessed it, Bart Starr! Pictured here with his wife Cheryl and Travis Cherry, Bart is a frequent customer of Firebirds Birmingham.

Also sports fans, Firebirds of Phoenix participated in the Opening Game Day activities at the Peoria Sports Complex. Pictured above are Ryan Marcum, Matt Quintanna, Brandon Prazma, Brandon Child, Mari Riley, Stephanie DeHaro, and Wendy Kay... along with regular guests, Laney and Brad Wilks.



# The Operations "Review" - by Gerald Pulsinelli



"Firebirds is a team of people dedicated to providing an elevated dining experience like no other..." This comes right from our Credo. We must ask ourselves, "What tools do we have access to everyday that will enable us to keep our promise and achieve this?"

The most comprehensive checklist we must use is our Systems in Place. This is our checks and balance system to ensure all the right tools are in place. This will allow us to conduct business so that we are operating

effectively and efficiently, which will ultimately provide a dining experience like no other to each and every guest.

Tools only work if the people operating them understand why, how, and when we use them. It is our job as leaders to make sure our staff understands how the tools work. We do that by: tell, show, let/try, observe, and praise. Where have you heard these 5 steps before?

In the Front of House, the tools we have to work with are: the Showtime Manual, Red Carpet Commitment Cards,

Performance Pointers, the seven attributes of our style of service, the commitment to service reports, and most importantly, talking with our guests each and every shift. These tools will help us achieve our goal of creating Raving Fans. In the Back of the House we have: order guides, production schedules, recipe adherence, line checks, line execution and window management manuals.



These are just some of the tools that will affect the guest experience.

How often do we review these tools amongst ourselves and our staff? What do we do every shift to ensure we are using our tools effectively and efficiently? Feedback and Accountability are two of the cornerstones on how we will grow the concept. Tools are only as good as the people using them.

How good are your tools?

The Firebirds logo is a constant reminder that one of our most important goals is to ignite and inspire passion in everything we do.

## Go Getter - by Rita Bielecki

**No Small Feat...**At 6' 6", Ryan Dompier is a force to be reckoned with. In only six short months, Ryan has left an indelible mark on Firebirds, as well as the city of Chandler. Ryan is the event coordinator at the Chandler location, and has been an instrumental part of creating the "buzz" that has contributed to Chandler's growing sales. Ryan's trademark grin, attention to detail, and genuine hospitality have stood out since joining the team in October.

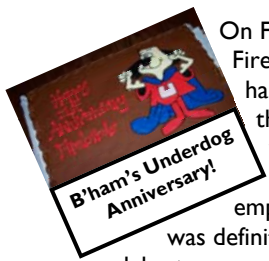
Ryan took it upon himself to spread the word about Firebirds one day after he and I discussed ways to promote the restaurant during pre-shift. Immediately, Ryan returned with a ten page packet he had assembled involving in-depth marketing strategies. Since then, Ryan has built many relationships with people in the area. His biggest focus was working with the hotels around Chandler and has since set up a concierge program that has brought a lot of new guests to the restaurant. Ryan developed a

monthly calendar with the Residence Inn which paved the way for Firebirds to sample their food twice a month to at least 100 guests at a time. He has also built relationships with many of the radio stations that have sponsored on-air promotions for the Chandler and Peoria restaurants. Ryan has reached out to fire and police departments, schools, and large corporations. He has been instrumental in developing relationships with other local businesses and worked side by side with the rest of the management team and me on the sampling program. When asked where his secret marketing talent came from, Ryan replied, "Marketing is easy when you have a great staff and a product that sells itself, which I feel we do." All in all, this go-getter has taken marketing to the next level and has shown that he has PRIDE and passion for Firebirds Rocky Mountain Grill.



CONGRATULATIONS RYAN!

## Anniversaries

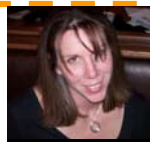


On February 16<sup>th</sup>, Firebirds Birmingham celebrated their first anniversary! With 35 tenured employees, there was definitely reason to celebrate.

With an Underdog theme, the anniversary party was complete with an Underdog cake and door prizes.



Montez Sledge, Josh Neil & 'Ms. Janet' Moore of B'ham



Tammy T.

Summit Mall.

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, Firebirds Raleigh also celebrate an anniversary, their 4<sup>th</sup>! Out of the 39 tenured employees, 2 have been there for 4 years, 8 for 3 years, 10 for 2 years, and 19 for 1 year. Nolan Young, the only 4-year hourly employee, was



Brandon Pennington, 'LA' Schmitt & Mason Grimes of B'ham

given a bottle of Girard Napa Valley Red Wine along with a weekend stay at the Sheraton Chapel Hill for himself and his wife. The grand prize winner for the Raleigh anniversary party was Jamie Lee, a 3-year hourly employee, who won a \$100 gift card to the mall and a PF Chang's gift card. The



Lisa & Nolan of Raleigh

second prize winner, Cirilio Gallegos, won a \$50 gift card to Target.

Congratulations to all our winners and thank you again for all your support!

Coming in the next few months, we will be celebrating the one year anniversaries for both Raleigh 2 and Omaha, as well as the "birth" of our two newest restaurants, Charlotte and Collierville!



Nate, Cirilio & Lisa of Raleigh



Lisa & Jamie of Raleigh

# Hospitality Mentality - by Steve Kislow



They say "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." For over a year, veteran Managing Partner, John Thomas, waited his turn at running a Firebirds Rocky Mountain Grill. North Hills Mall was a long awaited project in which Firebirds International completed its 9<sup>th</sup> location. John Thomas was the obvious choice for this highly anticipated lifestyle center opening. His commitment to excellence, his passion for the guest, and his sales building mentality formed the necessary equation for the success of this new location. John Thomas didn't need any "new tricks" or "silver bullets" to begin his successful journey in Raleigh. He just did

what he does best...Take great care of the employees and the guests, and displaying sincerity and graciousness in everything he does. John always displays such PRIDE in his staff when celebrating victories, both large and small.

John Thomas has exercised the Hospitality Mentality over and over again during his tenure at the young Raleigh location. He has inspired his management team and has instilled a culture rich in hospitality in his hourly staff. He and his team have become rooted in the community, participating in philanthropic events and being an ambassador for Firebirds within

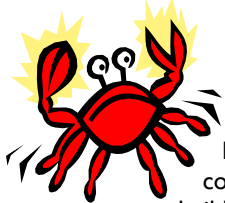
the lifestyle center. This involvement has acted as a catalyst in the increasing sales trends of this growing market.

John's involvement in the lifestyle center was illustrated when Tyler Fray, Firebirds Director of Marketing, received a call from the Director of Marketing for North Hills Mall. The mall executive took time out of her busy day to praise John's consistent efforts to market Firebirds and has time and time again set Firebirds apart from the other restaurants in the center. She made several comments about the various things that his team does from sampling tray food drops to their

involvement in center events. She made reference to the feeling "that you are the most important person in the restaurant" when you dine there. This is what the Hospitality Mentality is all about. Thanks John Thomas and Team Raleigh 2 for showing us what good performance looks like.



John Thomas - MP at Firebirds Raleigh 2



## What's Shakin' - by Tyler Fray

Excitement is continuing to build in the first quarter. We have rolled out new marketing initiatives in 3 of our markets, as well as tried and true methods in several others. In conjunction with the ACC and NCAA tournaments, we "fished while the fish were biting" and took advantage of the increased number of listeners tuning in to AM radio by advertising during this time. If you turned your dial to WFNZ 610 AM in Charlotte you could hear Mark "The Packman" Packer talk live about Firebirds every Monday - Friday at 5:40pm and also at 6:10pm on Wednesdays and Fridays. Every Monday throughout the tournaments and continuing on afterwards, you can hear Mark talk while he tastes Firebirds flavorful

food, with live food drops orchestrated by Chef Steve Sturm and MP Chuck Hall. In the Raleigh/Durham market, those who tuned in could hear "the buzz" about Firebirds on 850 AM The Buzz! Chef Adam Smith and MP John Thomas did 3 food drops during the tournaments.



Most recently on April 3<sup>rd</sup> the Mojo Morning Show enjoyed some Firebirds fare and were talking us up on air. In addition, we had 30 and 60 second spots running throughout the tournaments.

Omaha, Birmingham, Memphis, Raleigh, Tucson, Phoenix and Chandler all ran newspaper inserts on Wednesday 2/22 and 3/15 targeting select homes in their areas. The creative consisted of full color food shots, a branding/image

testimonial, the Mountain Time menu or Wine Down Monday, depending on the specific restaurant. The Thursday through Saturday after the first drop were the busiest Thursday, Friday and Saturday we have had in the New Year.

Excitement is literally building at Northlake Mall in Charlotte where the 11<sup>th</sup> Firebirds plans to open in April. We are partnering with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Charlotte for our Charity Mixer which will include live promotional radio endorsements weeks before the opening, as well as a live appearance by Mark Packer of WFNZ the evening of the event. We'll be using all our bells and whistles for our fourth restaurant to open in North Carolina with anticipated newspaper coverage



and tentative plans for a newspaper insert, searchlight, billboard, \$10 gift card giveaways around the mall, movie theater advertising, mall marketing, email blasts, Friends & Family night, Charity Mixer night....and that's just the opening! The new store décor will be a little more hip and jazzy with bold colors, patterns and designs.

From the buzz about town, it appears we have a lot of excited folks living north of the StoneCrest location whose mouths are watering, waiting for Firebirds to open. With the Northlake restaurant, guests can finally take a short trip and take a taste of Colorado, right outside their door. In addition, many of the management that will be part of the Northlake restaurant either started or trained at our StoneCrest location. What a great feeling of pride to be building on that.



**Congratulations!** The winner of the last contest and a \$25 Amex gift card was Lisa Kozloff from Raleigh, NC. The correct answer for number of times the word "Firebirds" appeared in the last newsletter was 35. Thanks for your participation!

**The Fire Inside Contest:** As PRIDE is the focus of 2006, create a Firebirds related phrase for the acronym PRIDE. (Use each letter as the first letter of each word in the phrase, for example, **P**assion **R**esides **I**n **D**edicated **E**mployees.) One winner will be drawn from all entries.

**Rules and Regulations:** The contest will begin at 12:00 pm EST on Tuesday, April 4, 2006 and end on Tuesday, April 18, 2006 at midnight EST. (All calls outside of this timeframe will be disregarded.) The Contest Call Line number is 1-877-276-6245 and the voicemail box is number 370. To be eligible, you must leave your full name, restaurant location, a contact phone number and the correct answer to the contest question. (If you are a guest of Firebirds, please leave your mailing address as well.) One call per person, all duplicate calls will be disregarded. The winners will be announced in the next issue of *The Fire Inside*.

