

PART OF THE INDUSTRY

PRODUCE BUSINESS is a very special magazine, and the issue you hold in your hands is a special issue. Launched October 19, 1985, at the PMA convention in San Francisco, with this issue we celebrate the 29th birthday of what has become a produce industry institution.

From the beginning, PRODUCE BUSINESS has undertaken a different responsibility than is customary for a publication. Instead of defining its mission in a reactive, purely journalistic sense – “All the News That’s Fit to Print” as *The New York Times* does – we announced we would initiate Industry Improvement.

So we have, in print, online and in person, across the country and across the continents. We’ve quietly counseled in the corridors of government, with captains of industry and the hushed halls of non-profits and associations and we have proudly, and publicly, stood up for what was right – even when the cost of doing so was substantial.

Normally every page of PRODUCE BUSINESS is about business: We focus on Marketing, Merchandising, Management and Procurement, and we use every ounce of ink, every electron on the web and every speech at our events to help industry participants to do business better while effectively guiding the industry to greater prosperity. Each year, though, on our anniversary, we set aside this one page in a gesture of respect for the opinions of the readers who make all we do possible, to provide a report on the progress of the year.

This year has been of special note. This past June we took the concept of The New York Produce Show and Conference, which we present along with the Eastern Produce Council, and launched The London Produce Show and Conference, presented with the Fresh Produce Consortium. In doing so, we helped pivot the attention of the produce world to this great standard-setting market, the United Kingdom, but more, we began a commercial, intellectual and friendship exchange in the two great capitals of the Anglosphere.

We also began a process that will encourage the sharing of ideas and the building of

connections that will pave the path to industry improvement in years to come. Already, we have the first British member of our Executive Share Groups that for decades have been exclusively North American.

This process will continue in the year ahead. The New York Produce Show and Conference this year moves to the new North Pavilion of the Jacob Javits Convention Center, a world-class facility, and many of our British friends are flying in to be part of the ideas and friendship. Looking ahead to June of 2015 and the 2nd iteration of the London event, leading intellectual lights of the global produce ecosystem, people such as Edward McLaughlin, the Robert G. Tobin Professor of Marketing, director of the Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management’s undergraduate program, and director of the Food Industry Management Program at Cornell University, and Roberta Cook, cooperative extension specialist and lecturer at U.C. Davis, will be jetting to The London Produce Show and Conference to help build the links of ideas and friendship that make for a stronger industry.

Of course, all this has taken decades of nurturing. PRODUCE BUSINESS gave rise to the Perishable Pundit, which begat the New York Produce Show, which led to the London event. There are other magazines, websites, share groups, etc., with many more exciting things to come. The upcoming winter may be cold, but look forward to the launch of PRODUCE ENTHUSIAST – the first consumer magazine focused solely on the world of produce and a new tool for the trade to directly reach out to consumers.

Skills in nurturing are useful in many areas of life. This year was a milestone for another October 19th baby. William Ian Prevora, also known as Jr. Pundit Primo, was born right after 9/11. We wrote in these pages that in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks we saw his birth as a kind of response, a statement of faith in the future. With terrorists beheading people with regularity, ISIS running free across the Fertile Crescent and the threat of a break-out of Ebola frightening us all, we could use a little renewal of faith right now.

William reaches 13 years of age during the PMA in Anaheim, and we have just celebrated

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his Bar Mitzvah. Contrary to popular usage, one can’t really have a Bar Mitzvah, for it is a status, not an event. It translates as “Son of the Commandment” and means that the boy has reached a stage of moral responsibility and will now be held responsible for his actions.

William worked hard, reading his portion direct from the Torah, without benefit of vowels or punctuation, then discoursing in English on his interpretation of his portion. Then we moved onto the party, and William showed his prowess at hip-hop dancing with a grand entrance number.

It was hard work and good fun and so reminded us of the produce trade, where the same person who will compete desperately for the last nickel on a deal will also kill to pick up the check at dinner that night.

One of the reasons for the strength of PRODUCE BUSINESS is we are not only about the industry but we are of the industry. Sharing word of personal milestones such as a wedding, a birth and now a Bar Mitzvah is part of the joys and struggles of life, and integrating with life is part of the challenge of business.

We are appreciative that your attention to what we write and do makes it all possible, and we pledge to redouble our efforts to nurture an industry and to hold out a hand in friendship.

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