

New Members

Tyler Lindley
Freckled & Blue, LLC
Smyrna, GA

Justin Zimmerman
Weatherford, OK

Mike Cass
The Lodge
Ft. Myers, FL

Christopher Kay
Mr. Grill LLC
Watertown, MA

Steve Roberts
Texas Jacks Barbecue
Arlington, TX

LeighAnn Bakunas
YETI Coolers
Austin, TX

Howard Miller
Miller Catering & Concessions Inc.
Lafayette, IN

Scott Simmons
Dig In Cafe and Catering
Scotts, MI

John Bates
Barbecue Displays
Walker, MI

Thomas Bock
T & S Catering
Valparaiso, IN

Pamela Murphy
WRTW, Inc
St. Augustine, FL

Kevin Lange
Kevin's House of Smoke
Clarkston, MI

Sue Bette
Bluebird Barbecue
Burlington, VT

Carey Bringel
Peg Leg Porker
Nashville, TN

Catherine Newman
Edley's 12South
Nashville, TN

David Swett
Swett's
Nashville, TN

Pat Martin
Martin's BBQ Joint
Nashville, TN

Dominic Galloro
Route 40 BBQ
Havre de Grace, MD

Member Spotlight: Harry Soo

By Ann Ewing
NBBQA Public Relations

When you think of the business of BBQ, you think of the obvious: restaurants, catering companies, spice rub creators and equipment makers. But NBBQA member and newly elected Western Region board member Harry Soo has translated his passion for barbecue into a truly unique business enterprise. As head cook of the competition team Slap Yo Daddy BBQ in Diamond Bar, California (SlapYoDaddyBBQ.com), Soo translates the skills required to function as a competition pitmaster into corporate training sessions and teambuilding workshops using mock barbecue competitions. His past clients include Fortune 1,000 entertainment, pharmaceutical, and transportation companies.

A 25-year water industry veteran, Soo is responsible for the strategic, operational and tactical direction of the IT infrastructure of a \$2 billion utility, so he knows how to find consensus and take action across a broad spectrum of diverse stakeholders.

"I'm professional project manager who oversees a team of project managers, and I manage timelines, quality, people and large-scale projects," said Soo. "I've taken my experience of overseeing projects that spend \$200,000 a week and blended it with my passion for barbecue. I work with corporate C-Level clients to create high performance teams as they focus on setting goals, working as a team, defining roles and executing strategies using a mock BBQ contest as their pressure cooker for a day."

Soo uses the compressed timeline required to make excellent 'cue to take participants through a process. From finance and engineering to legal and operations, they are forced to work together to reach a common goal. At his training sessions, they do everything a barbecue pro has to do: They create team branding, assign roles, cook, present and verbally pitch their cooking methodology and represent their product.

It's a business model that is clearly working, Soo teaches his classes around the country, and his training gets consistently high marks from participants.

Soo's introduction to barbecue was like it is for a lot of people, a happy accident. He came to the United States from Malaysia as an international student at Texas Tech in the 1980s. It was there that he first tasted

traditional Texas-style barbecue, and, of course, he was hooked. As he pursued his undergraduate degree, then an MBA and then a high-pressure career, barbecue was always a sideline.

In 2008, while discussing "bucket lists" at work, his coworkers challenged him to with a "stretch" goal to compete in a barbecue contest. He entered a local competition assuming it would be a "one and done" undertaking, but he walked away from that competition as Reserve Champion and winner of 1st place in the chicken category.

Since then, Soo has won season one of TLC's BBQ Pitmasters and 27 Grand Championships and over 80 first place wins.

He holds several high profile titles including KCBS Chicken TOY 2012, KCBS Ranchers Beef Cup 2011 and 2012; California Team of the Year 2010 and 2011; Arizona Team of the Year 2010 and 2011; 2010 Grand Champion in Canada; 2012 Hawaii State Champion; and 2012 British BBQ Champion. He also has a history-making 1st place in all four meat categories in the 2009 Way Out West BBQ Championship.

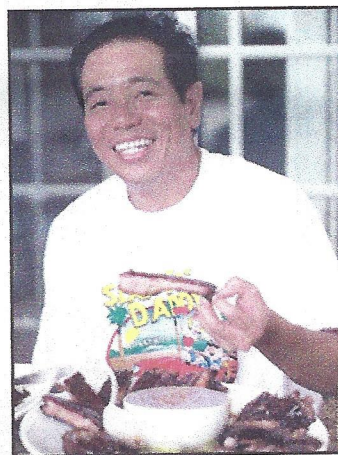
He is involved in numerous barbecue projects in his state, and a portion of his barbecue proceeds benefit

charities he's passionate about including Operation Homefront, which takes care of active military, veterans, and their families, and Save The Children. He is also assisting a startup company that is developing an inexpensive barbecue grill for underdeveloped countries. The goal is to be able to create a product that can cook a meal using coconut husks and dried animal droppings and can also charge a cellphone using thermal electric technology. Wow!

Soo joined the board this year and is looking forward to serving the organization. He is the Region 1 vice president and will represent members from Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming.

"BBQ folks come from all walks of life with diverse backgrounds and traditions, but we get around a fire, we immediately find common ground," said Soo. "Everyone at the NBBQA definitely has barbecue sauce in their veins. I'm very proud and honored to work with such a stellar cast of barbecue pros to further the business of barbecue with the NBBQA."

Learn more about NBBQA board members in future editions on the *National Barbecue News*!



HARRY SOO