



GELATO FIASCO ANNUAL REPORT TO OUR CUSTOMERS



2016

For our ninth full year, we considered writing an Annual Report that shared interesting numbers about dishes served, grocery stores reached, gallons of Maine milk churned, and pounds of strawberries hulled. But then we realized that we've been sitting on a wealth of funny, poignant, and delightful stories submitted by our employees at our Maine locations each day.

At the end of every shift, an employee fills out a digital report with answers to a few questions, including this one: “Each day should matter. What was the BEST part about today for our customers or our company?” Those reports get sent to the management team immediately (usually resulting in a late-night chuckle, raised eyebrow, or resolve to fix something), but also get beamed to the cloud. We've reviewed a year's worth of those comments and compiled our favorites on these pages.

At the end of the day, our business is about the little things — the gelato maker at our Flavor Foundry caring as much about the 200th pint of the day as the first pint of the day, the scooper proudly sharing our desserts with an excited customer, the customer who shows a little extra understanding to a staff member overwhelmed by a sudden and surprise crowd.

We hope you'll enjoy some of the stories and snippets that follow; some consequential, some random, most plain fun. At the end of 2016, we think they prove something, too — it's the tiny moments of kindness and delight in our daily lives that go a long way toward making our communities special. Thank you to you, our customers, for helping to write these stories, and to our employees for jotting them down over the past 365 days.

- *Gelato Fiasco*

January

Got a woman VERY excited to buy one of our reusable freezer bags.
She couldn't wait to get it home and show her husband.

Incredibly cold. Down to 10 degrees currently. The Frozen Code is doing work.

The best part of today was when a very little boy in a very large full-body snowsuit came in and got house chocolate with lots of sprinkles. So cute!

Most exciting to our customers today: Our variety, especially three separate dairy-free chocolate flavors, "weird" flavors like Wassail Cider, Horchata, Old Major Persnickety, and unlimited samples and dish combinations = fun!

Hot beverage appreciation time! Had one customer extol our pour-over coffee, a couple that ordered identical cocoa affogatos ("we NEVER get the same thing!"), and another couple that was enthralled by the drinking-chocolate process (especially those house marshmallows)!

A man came in and was really excited that we had "full-sugar" raspberry sorbetto.

Fragrant Salty Nuts Gelato made my day.
Customers ordering it had a hard time not smiling. -Mike

Today had a great Saturday afternoon atmosphere, as despite the iffy weather customers were relaxed and lingered in the shop to eat and socialize.

Big Al stopped in!

I also got to talk about how gelato is made to 4-year-old girl and her mother; they were peeking in the kitchen window.

The best part was a little boy who was absolutely thrilled and transfixed by the fact that we had a small window that let him see into the kitchen.

A young customer visiting from Boston with his family was very impressed to look into our kitchen because we "have multiple clocks," and his preschool "only has one clock at a time."

Joanne G. brought a friend in who was super excited about all the different flavors and loved the patterns on the gelato.

"It's my birthday... we made the trip from New Hampshire just for Holy Donut and Gelato Fiasco." — Brand-new RSS member Mana M.

Eric S. finally redeemed his free Fiasco. It was epic.

Had a fun conversation with a group on a day trip from Mass. about the absurdities of Boston's city planning... I heard tell of a one-way dead end street. Luckily they got here from there.

Had a customer tell me how she introduced GF to her friends back home and felt betrayed when they visited without her.

A California woman who visits us in the summer called because she was planning a trip through the San Francisco area and heard there was a store with our pints.

According to the map, she can find us in San Jose.
(*Ed.: And all Whole Foods stores in Northern California.*)

Opening day for Portland Pie Co. in Brunswick,
which brought a larger-than-usual Monday night after-dinner crowd.

February

A first-time store customer recognized our pints:
"So I HAVE had your gelato before!"

Teamwork around the shop. Folks were raving about the case looking fantastic.

Things got FIXED!

One customer was absolutely fascinated by the Dip Jar. We talked about it for a while and then he thanked me for talking to him about "the most interesting thing he heard all day."

Two guests came in to get gelato and had me take a photo. They told me they run a business, FatFace, that is headquartered in the UK, and told everyone back home about us. Googling the company name and "Portland" brings up a Press Herald article from August. Here's the subheadline: "When the CEO scoured the Northeast for a location, he was looking especially for a place that offered great ice cream."

Scooping for Community had this place hopping like crazy for a couple hours!

The plethora of folks coming in for cookies!
Haven't had a day this disproportionate yet.

Had someone tell me that God of Thunder ruined all other coffees for him
— it's that good!

Tim said the music in the shop tonight was fabulous.

A customer described the Lavender Honey Gelato as “Like eating a candle but in a super good way!” I thought that was funny and nice.

Frozen Code still blows minds, and reactions never cease to brighten the day.

Valentine’s Weekend flavor selection is great today! Netflix and Chill Gelato seems to be a fan favorite so far. I’ve scooped two pints for someone.

All the customers really liked our Valentine’s Day flavors.
Everyone was super excited about them.

A mother and her teenage daughter came into the shop. Seeing the Netflix and Chill flavor, she turned to her daughter in full obliviousness, and said, “That’s you!” Much laughter from the daughter and confusion from the mother ensued.

So many people were deeply impressed with the Frozen Code. Lots of excitement and happiness, especially when they realized it is something we do every day in the winter.

Another call from California, from a woman looking for our pints near Newport Beach. She told me that she had lots of options for gelato, but nothing quite like ours. Turns out there are lots of Gelato Fiasco grocers in her area. (*Ed.: Folks in Southern California can try Ralph’s, Gelson’s, and Bristol Farms stores to find their GF fix.*)

A group of girls came right at open to film scenes for a movie on bullying. They were very polite and professional, and it was fun to catch snippets of their project.

A woman came in to get gelato for her daughter who had just had her wisdom-teeth out and was delighted to see that we had her daughter’s favorite flavor:
Special Hazelnut.

Thirty martial arts students came in for treats. They left happy
and no kicks ensued.

Hal won a trip to Vegas!

It was SO cold today; I think we hit a new record for the Frozen Code,
or at least close to it (-6 degrees)!

I had a customer who came in to get gelato on his last day in Maine and was delighted to discover that he had a free dish available to him on his account.

A family with a couple young children spent quite a while looking for red spoons in all the artwork. They were very thorough!

Elementary school field trip! Lots of eager and excited faces to learn about gelato and watch how it's made. They were especially amused by Sara and her funny faces through the window.

March

Alisa had her first wedding tasting of the season here today — a sure sign of spring.
(*Ed.: Alisa is our wedding catering coordinator.*)

Scooping for Community for Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run with celebrity scooper police officers. The police officers created a very care-free atmosphere and were really fun to work with.

A woman who bought a large cone says we “beat the competition by a country mile.”

A couple of the Five Guys guys have started coming to us for coffee.
(*Ed.: What about the other three?*)

A customer brought a couple friends in for the first time. As they were leaving, I heard him say, “See, I TOLD you it was awesome.”

I love it when little kids pronounce flavors that are more sophisticated. One little girl said “Stracciatella” and corrected her dad when he said it wrong. Wooh!

Impressed a vegan with the existence and taste of Noir!

Seriously, that Sicilian Pistachio is amazing.

A customer came in and was completely baffled by whether or not to go with the Pure Lemon or Lemon Vanilla. I suggested both, which sparked the philosophical question, “Can Pure Lemon mixed with Lemon Vanilla really be called Pure Lemon?” We called it “The Great Lemon Vanilla Dilemma.”

“Tell Bobby the New Jersey people say hello.” — The New Jersey People

All the things!

RSS member Kenzie S., buying bags of God of Thunder, says her mother is thoroughly enamored of it and can't bear to run out.

Cliff is back from his road trip.

The Scout's Secret Stash Gelato is SOOOO good!!!!

A spirited game of Clue by some happy customers from Richmond occurred.

Excitement for the Easter Flavors... a mother brought in her two boys, who had been waiting all year to have the “Easter Basket” (i.e. all four Easter flavors together).

A teenage girl here with her brother: “When we went to Italy, I made sure we stopped at all the gelato places, but you’re still the best.”

Had a customer call just to let us know that while they were at the grocery store to get their favorite Ben and Jerry’s ice cream, they instead picked up Espresso Chip Gelato... and they loved it!

A young woman was excited about Needhams: “You have potato candy!” She said she makes Needhams for Christmas every year.

April

A couple of Portland Public Library employees came in to get the Shakespeare flavor. They were excited to hear that we’d had people visit them after hearing about the First Folio exhibit from us (and vice versa).

An overheard conversation:

Mom: “Let’s get going... we’re not just going to stay here all day.”

Son: “Awww, I thought that is what we were doing!”

I was Punk’d by a couple that was speaking Italian and a person in another group who knew Italian and was helping translate. Turns out in the end they all spoke perfect English.

Some customers from away tried the Malt Iced Coffee and were excited when I mentioned the Tandem connection.

So many Foundry employees showed up with their family members!

Had a customer with a food allergy and was complimented on how well we handle allergens.

The celebrity scooper that we had today was an amazing person and so much fun to work with!

There was a “Stars on Ice” event at the Cross Arena and many kids came in wearing colorful costumes. It was like the spring edition of Halloween.

We were packed most of the day despite the construction barricades, jack-hammering, and missing sidewalks.

There were several toddlers who came in and had a huge fascination with our trash bins by the doors. (*Ed.: It's the simple things, right?*)

A 3-year-old girl, after I brought her family through the flavors, asked her parents why I wasn't sitting and eating with them. She kept pointing back and saying, "But, but..."

Sara got a few nice compliments on the case today. One customer said it reminded her of Italy. Another was delighted to see gelato in the United States (particularly when I mentioned the pint line).

Supah dupah nice out! We had a weird rush around 9:30 that lasted until about 10, with quite a few people trickling in afterward. Overall, a busy night. The summer and tourist season cometh.

The day started with a large group of elementary school children. Many had their first "Jelly-oh" dishes.

More and more out-of-towners are recognizing our pints from their home grocery stores.

People I have entered into the Red Spoon Society today include a 5-year-old, an employee of the Department of Justice, and a guy with the number "2" for a middle initial. You can't say our customers aren't diverse!

Lots of interesting people came in from all around America (mostly New Hampshire).

All our customers today were super friendly, easygoing, and glad to be here. We have lovely customers in general but today it seemed to be EVERYONE.

The best part of today was how thankful the Furniture Friends people were for being able to raise money through us. Pretty much every single person who came for the Scooping for Community thanked me at the register.

It was an incredibly busy. The summer is almost upon us.

Many, many new faces coming in today. There was also an afternoon Fiasco for a birthday party. Despite the gloomy weather, people are loving today.

Brunswick Teen Center Scoop-a-Thon! The Bowdoin Women's Rugby Team rocked celebrity scooping, srsly hire them.

May

Can we please change the name of Netflix & Chill?
I think everyone is exhausted of explaining it.
(*Ed.: For the record, it's a caramel gelato with a bed of brownie bits,
pillows of peanut butter cups, and if you're lucky, some kisses.*)

A visiting couple came in and told me that they'd been leaving the Holy Donut when someone told them they had to check us out next.

Portland Phoenix Best of Portland for five years running! Congrats everyone!

We had an enthusiastic new customer, who almost cried when we told him he could have as many flavors as he wanted. Here's the note he left:
"The two lovely ladies behind the counter were just as enthusiastic about gelato as I am. As a newcomer in Portland, and to Maine, I was very impressed, and delighted to have walked into your shop!"

During the rush, there was a woman who looked a lot like Hillary Clinton.

Saved a little boy from a day of heartbreak after he dropped his gelato while crossing the street, by running out with a new one. Tears avoided!

June

A pair of pregnant women came in (one of them twice) to celebrate their due dates with large quantities of gelato. One of them said, "Of course I'm ordering a large! Isn't that the whole point of being pregnant?"

Old Port Fest! Right around 2:30, we had a customer at the register says we all looked "remarkably un-stressed-out!"

Got to see lots of PRIDE today. :)

There were adorable kids who came in: "OKAY, LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS."

A man from Albuquerque told me he is here visiting his son's family and came in almost every day of his visit last year. He eagerly joined the Red Spoon Society.

A girl who was about two years old decided that behind the counter looked really cool and wandered back to stand next to Meilin... it was truly adorable.

The customers were very agreeable today. (*Ed.:* 🧒 😊)

An early customer who considered himself an expert on all things frozen (but especially Midwestern custard shops) was delighted and fascinated by our waffle cone-making process.

A mom and her son came in today and were SO excited because they had dairy allergies and had never had good dairy-free ice cream. "You changed our lives today."

July

There was a baby dressed like a flower; she was very well-behaved.

Two groups of people have already used their certificates from the Strawberry Fest picking event! They're excited to taste the fruits of their labor soon.

Construction workers tonight came in a few times and got drinking chocolate to clear their evening and "stay awake, possibly."

(Ed.: The Great Fore Street Veranda Construction of 2016! Looks fantastic now, though.)

There was a beautiful Australian shepherd dog outside and I think I love it.

**The waffle irons in Brunswick are working again.
TIME TO SHIFT INTO MAXIMUM OVERDRIVE. -Mia**

Captain's Log Supplemental, these are the voyages of the Starship Fiasco...

There were a record number of perfectly formed handprints on the door today.

Although we ran out of all but four gelato flavors by the end of the night, the intrepid gelato lovers still came and ate directly out of pints! Although we might have lost a few to across the street...

We were a stop for both a scavenger hunt and a bachelorette party, and otherwise a popular destination for tourists, summer programs, etc.

A lady asked me if there was strawberry in the chocolate-covered strawberry...

Caramel Brownie Bits!

Scooped about 40 dishes for the Portland Press Herald.

One person misread the Bidy Bidy Babka as Bidy Bidy Vodka.

A small group carrying suitcases came in shortly after opening and told me, "We've decided it's time we moved in."

August

A member of the Red Spoon Society who had four free dishes on his account told me to give them to two customers in line as a surprise after getting two dishes for himself.

Charlie came in to repair several things and brought his wife, Margie, with him who was impressed by how immaculate the store looked.

(Ed.: Charlie is Josh's dad, and Margie is Josh's mom. And that's high praise!)

Time flew by so fast.

Today two 7-year-old boys came in, seemingly without their parents, and they had EXCELLENT MANNERS. 10/10 amazing.

Customers complimented us on our flavors (especially blueberry sorbetto), our cones, and our customer service (one woman thanked me for verbally welcoming customers into the shop).

Someone came in wearing a Hamilton shirt and I almost died of excitement! After I recovered we bonded and it was the best ever.

An Eddie Vedder song played.

One customer said that our gelato was better than an Italian gelato company in NYC that always has a line out the door. He said we would put them out of business if we opened nearby!

There was a senior citizen who ordered gelato in a dish. After I handed him his dish, his wife approached. He handed her the dish he got and I asked if he wanted another spoon. He casually responded, "No, we swap spit all the time."
The end.

A little boy exclaimed "THE COOKIE NEEDS THERAPY!" pretty loudly and abruptly in the earlier part of the day. Luci and I lost it.

There was a yellow jacket bee hanging out on one of the tables. He didn't like it when I moved the chairs around.

Saw the cutest baby ever today. I realized I say that every time, but honestly, how can you top a cute baby? - Mary

(Ed.: After reviewing a year's worth of these reports, I can confirm that if a cute baby enters the premises, Mary does not miss it.)

Bruno's smiling face.

A regular came in and told me that her friend was visiting for three days, and after having Strawberry Balsamic, the friend would not talk about anything else.

First customers of the day: the older daughter had found out about us on Snapchat, and he mother agreed that we were “the best place ever.”

A couple came in today and got a large
to celebrate their 48th marriage anniversary. **HEART EYES**

WE LOVE HAMILTON PLAYING IN THE STORE. YAY HAMILTON. (But Peter thinks that too much Broadway is playing.) (But Maddie really loves it.) Also Case 2 got worked on and it currently sitting at a VERY COOL 8 degrees. :)

Last day for the Maine State Music Theatre shows.
SUPER BUSY. Who would have guessed?

September

A cute little boy came in and got a dish and said that it was “ten hundred percent good.”

EMPLOYEE 1, eating a bacon cheddar donut from Holy Donut.

EMPLOYEE 2: “What is that!?”

EMPLOYEE 1: “A melted ball of bacon and cheese wrapped in deep-fried dough.”

EMPLOYEE 2: “Also how I describe myself.”

I have never seen so many Gelato Fiasco employees lose it so quickly.

Everyone really loved seeing the cones being made today! One group came in and wanted to watch how they were being made, and it made their day.

Had a couple from upstate New York come into the store and tell us how excited that they were to find our gelato at their local Fresh Market.

Peter came up with our next best-selling flavor: Waffle Cone BATTER Gelato:
“Layered with gallons of smooth salted butter, this silky waffle-cone-pre-cone delicacy is dotted with tahini, cinnamon, nutmeg, cardamom, and on occasion...
cloves.”

Got to guide a customer (who hasn't been in Brunswick in three years but gets our God of Thunder at home!) through the process of making a cold brew as well as a single cup of cold coffee!

We have drinking chocolate and star marshmallows again! Wooooo!

October

The best part about today was a customer through there was wild turkey meat in the Fall in Bourbon County. (*Ed: It's Wild Turkey-brand whiskey.*)

A woman on her way to the airport (back to Atlanta) made her taxicab stop outside our shop so she could get one last treat of Sweet Resurgam en route.

A customer said her son and his family just moved to Boston, and everybody he's met there who's been to this area of Maine thinks of two things when they think of Brunswick: The library and Gelato Fiasco. My feedback: (1) That's great news for us. (2) The library!

A customer came in with her ridiculously adorable baby and the baby was super bouncy and excited about the Apple Cider & Donuts.

Bowdoin College Parentals Weekend! And they don't stop comin' and they don't stop comin' and they don't stop comin'.

A couple of customers came in for the first time and had a great first experience. They got Big County Brownie, Apple Cider & Donuts, Cake Batter, Madagascar Vanilla Bean, Pumpkin Pie, and Sweet Resurgam.

A former resident of Portland came in today amazed by how much had changed over 5 years. Of all the restaurants and bars, Gelato Fiasco was her favorite addition.

A customer called and identified as transgender. They told us how welcome they felt coming into our shop. They described the shop as a place that felt safe, and where they didn't need to worry about formulating an exit plan.

A tiny dog walked by the shop. Also the heat appears to be working, so that's pretty cool. This little girl got a small dish and was totally intent on getting every last drop of gelato out of it. I think she succeeded.

November

Soulful music today for a rainy day on the shop stereo.

Had someone ask if we can do a Gelato Fiasco leather jacket.

There was a customer who had a great experience at our gelato-making class. She tells her friends about it and thinks we should advertise it more.

Anna Kendrick walked by and Instagrammed a picture of herself in front of Gelato Fiasco's window. (*Ed.: You can see it at [instagram.com/annakendrick47](https://www.instagram.com/annakendrick47).*)

Christmas tree and lights are up!!!!

December

Gelato case looked beautiful this morning.
Abe and Nick's designs were crisp! (And not just the Blueberry!)

It was the Portland Symphony Orchestra fundraiser today and the guest scoopers were awesome. Plenty of people from local offices came in to say hi and get some gelato. It was a totally success.

A man came in with his daughter and told me that he thinks this shop is one of the best places in Brunswick, and that it is the highlight of his day for him to be able to come in and spend quality time with his daughter in such a nice atmosphere.

A woman told me to tell the owners that the new Gingerbread Cookie Gelato is a HIT!

The best part of the day was when the array of children attacked the ghea. They were all so happy to be getting gelato and were so excited.

Peter was here!

APPENDIX I

Elsewhere at Gelato Fiasco

Most of these stories involve events at our Brunswick and Portland stores.

Milestones outside of the shops in 2016 were many:

- Completed a 10,000-square-foot expansion of our Flavor Foundry in Brunswick, ensuring that our pints across the United States will continue to be made in Brunswick for years to come.
- Added more than 1,000 Publix stores to our footprint. Four to six flavors are available at virtually every Publix store in Florida and the Southwest.
- Recognition as one of the Wall Street Journal's 50 top things for spring; as a top ice cream by the editors of Food & Wine; and for Ripe Mango Sorbetto, as the best frozen dessert in the nation by the prestigious Specialty Food Association's Awards in New York City. We were also named Down East Magazine's Readers' Choice for Best Ice Cream in Maine for the fourth consecutive year.
- Expansion to Australia, with placement in more than 700 7-Eleven stores on the continent. Josh and Bruno traveled to Melbourne for the launch.
- Our opening of a weeklong holiday pop-up shop on Newbury Street in Boston.

Surely more exciting news is coming in 2017. We resolve to continue to improve some of our pesky supply issues, which have impacted some customers over the past year. Most of all, we want to be your No. 1 choice for all-natural, artisanal Maine-made gelato, and appreciate your support!

APPENDIX II

Awards for Oddest Entries

I am concerned with the rapid rate at which the milk crates in the kitchen are reproducing. They will soon reach critical mass.

DAYS LATER: The milk crates have once again taken over the kitchen. We fought them with all of our strength but their sheer number overwhelmed us. Please send reinforcements.

DAYS LATER: We are drowning in milk crates here!

FROM THE ESTEEMED DESK OF:
~PLUMER, BROUGHTON AND CRAY, ATTORNEYS AT LAW.~

A gray beginning to the afternoon. Began to get busy around 6:00pm, but was oddly slow afterwards (...possibly because of sports going on tonight on the television). Began to get sort of busy again around 7:20, and stayed steady (but not necessarily busy) until close. Very much on the slower side for a Friday.

* Quite a few people have been asking about trios, has there been any word on when we are updating our signage?

* Also, any news regarding our dearly beloved ice machine? We miss it so much.

ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE:
-PLUMER, BROUGHTON AND CRAY 9/30/16

SEALED:
-HOBSON, QPA, notary public 9/30/16

The best part of today (even with the furnace trouble) was when Mary and Mads decided to make the midday report Hamilton themed; we were in the room when it happened and we could not throw away our shot.

We've practiced gelato, we've practically perfected it. We've seen injustice in the Orange Cardamom and we think we should correct it. (AKA it tastes like Airborne.)

Bowdoin is keeping their plans close to their chest. They'll wait here and see which way the wind will blow, so that they can pay for their ResLife tab in the morning.

Atlantic Federal Credit Union reminded us that we will have to work non-stop tomorrow between 12-12:30. (They are having some sort of event here tomorrow with 50 people.)

These city streets get colder, we shoulder every burden, every disadvantage we have learned to manage, we walk the store freezing.

