



# Current

DECEMBER 1983

THE PROFESSIONAL  
SOCIETY FOR THOSE  
WHO MANAGE MEETINGS

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Jerry Swiggart*

Meeting Planners International's Executive Committee is concerned with the number of members who do not renew their membership in MPI. A special task force was formed to look at the problem and has made recommendations to help correct this situation. A "Two For One" — RETAIN THE PRESENT AND BUILD FOR THE FUTURE CAMPAIGN has been started. A "Chapter Award for Retention" was presented to the Chapter with the best retention record at the San Francisco Mid-Year Meeting, December 4-7.

Within our own Chapter, we are also concerned with retention. Our Membership

Committee is looking at a campaign for us, plus our Programming/Education Committee is always trying to make all of our programs informative, educational, and interesting for our current membership.

We still have places on our numerous committees for members to become involved in your Chapter. Don't keep silent, be active, and let your thoughts be known.

We hope all of you had a very enjoyable family Thanksgiving. We all have so much to be thankful for. An early Very Merry Christmas and Most Happy New Year. Let's all work to be better in everything we do.

### IMPORTANT

The dates of the 1984 Annual (June) Conference for Washington, D.C. have been changed to June 21-14.

The change of dates also requires a program change to a Thursday-to-Sunday format from the previous Sunday-to-Wednesday style.

Activities will be as follows:

Tues., June 19 - Exec. Comm. Mtg.

Wed., June 20 - MPI Board Mtg.

Thurs., June 21 - CMF, Opening Reception

Fri., June 22 & Sat., June 23 - Meetings all day

Sun., June 24 - A.M. Meetings, check-out

## NOVEMBER MEETING

As has been the case in the past, our chapter combined the monthly program with that of an Associate Group, for a very successful November Meeting. The combined membership of D/FW Society of Association Executives and M.P.I. brought nearly 100 people to the Wyndham Hotel to listen to the advice and counsel of area tax experts as they reviewed I.R.S. considerations relating to foreign meetings.

Opening the discussion was Mr. Michael Jon Deppe, a local C.P.A. and Board Member of the Dallas chapter of C.P.A.'s. Reviewed were points such as what actually constitutes "Foreign Travel", under what circumstances are an executives' (or spouse) expenses deductible, and to what extent. Both Mr. Deppe and Bill Flannery spent a good deal of time giving the audience pointers on how to document and organize foreign meeting attendance and actual time and expense that is considered meeting related.

Flannery, a local association executive and lawyer, offered some particular suggestions for foreign meeting attendees to follow with regard to legal verification of expenses and participation: Be sure to get a written statement signed by an officer of your organization, including a meeting schedule, number of hours which the individual attending the meeting attended and such other information as may be required by regulation. You will always have a "Fighting Chance" for a deduction if you have documentation. Without the back up, the I.R.S. has you!

Beginning with this past meeting, our Program Committee is requesting that each attending member fill out a "Report Card" rating the program, logistics, and facilities for the event. In this regard our November Meeting has set a standard that will be a challenge for future programs to beat.



*Jerry Swiggart Chapter President and Dick Covert D/FW SAE President at November meeting.*

The November Report Card:

Program Content	B+
Speakers	A
Relevance of Topic	B+
AV & Handouts	B
Site (Wyndham)	B+
Timing of Luncheon	A
Beverage	B+
Service	B+
Parking	A-

# ST. MARTIN ON M.P.I.

by  
Connie Vaughn

*The D/FW Chapter is amply represented on the national level of MPI for 1983/84. In addition to our two International Directors, we have a local chapter leader serving as Vice President of External Affairs. Charlotte St. Martin brings to that position a wealth of knowledge and experience that will benefit the national organization and should make all of us in the metroplex proud she represents us.*

*Charlotte is a "Charter Member" of the D/FW Chapter, having joined M.P.I. in 1977. Since that time, she has served as President of the chapter and International Director. For this reason, we felt our membership would find her thoughts and observations on M.P.I. interesting. To this end, Connie Vaughn, a student member of the chapter, pursued Charlotte and filed the following interview.*

**Vaughn:** What is your position with Loews and how long have you been with them?

**St. Martin:** "I have been a Loews employee for over six years. I was hired as the first employee for the Anatole as the Director of Sales and Marketing in September of 1977 and held that position for five years.

**Vaughn:** How long have you been a member of MPI and what is your current involvement?

**St. Martin:** "I joined in 1977, which was the year our chapter was formed. My current responsibilities put me on the executive committee for the international organization as the Vice President of External Affairs. Prior to that I was on the International Board of Directors for two years representing the Dallas/Ft. Worth Chapter, and the year prior to that I was President of the Dallas/Ft. Worth Chapter."

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**"The reason why I personally am so supportive of MPI is because it is the one organization that I look at as my continuing education."**

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**Vaughn:** What do you consider some of the more important services MPI has to offer its membership?

**St. Martin:** "The education services are very, very important. Part of the education is getting to know suppliers and planners as an equal and as an associate versus a person you are doing business with. The

reason why I personally am so supportive of MPI is because it is the one organization that I look at as my continuing education. I do that for me, to help me become more professional and learn more about our industry. And because I take that approach, which I think is the approach of the industry, that I am an equal with all planners and they are equal with me, then we approach problem solving and creative ideas in a different format. I am not talking to that planner as if he is someone I am trying to sell. I am talking to him as a fellow professional from whom I can learn. I think that is the number one benefit MPI has to offer — it provides a common ground for people to meet and, in effect, a network to build up a repertoire of friends and associates that they can call on when they need assistance — or just need a good idea.



There are a lot of other areas. One area I also think that is obvious and often left out is the area of leadership training. In many of our jobs you have people who are usually in growth periods of their careers. As a rule, the meeting planning field is not the top job that any meeting planner wants. It may be part of that job, but usually there is something else they are building toward. Anytime you involve yourself voluntarily in an association, you have an opportunity to grow from a management skill position, by taking on committee assignments and officer positions. I think that the reason MPI grew more rapidly than any other organization of its type was because so many of the members of MPI are not professional meeting planners all of the time. Many of them have other responsibilities but needed to improve their meeting planning skills."

**Vaughn:** What are some of the main thrusts or goals for the future of MPI and have long range goals been established?

**St. Martin:** "There are some long range goals, but I do not think they are extremely specific. We are looking at putting together a five year marketing plan for MPI. One of the goals that has been in effect and is currently being realized is the certification of meeting planners. As an industry, I think the number one goal should be to be certified and to make the meeting planner position a much more respected and professional position in the eyes of the people, the companies or associations that employ the meeting planner."

**Vaughn:** How do you feel about the new certification program being sponsored by CLC which MPI will be a part of?

**St. Martin:** "I think it is outstanding. I think it is almost a necessity for a meeting planner at this point, especially with the number of people who consider themselves 'professional meeting planners'. I also think for the meeting planners to gain the professional recognition they desire and deserve, they need this certification to help make that point."

**Vaughn:** I understand there is a recent drop off in the membership of MPI. Can you explain why?

**St. Martin:** "There's not a drop off, there is a slowing down pace in the increase in membership. There was a time when we were doubling our size virtually every year. I think that has slowed down for several reasons. Number one, I think that there are just so many people in each city who are professional meeting planners and you will come to a point at which you have just saturated those people. Secondly, I think the recession had a little bit to do with that. But we have not yet decreased in membership. We are just growing at a slower pace, which is not unhealthy. We've really grown too quickly, and it's good to see it leveling off and growing at a more steady pace now."

**Vaughn:** What recommendations do you have for young people coming into meeting planning?

**St. Martin:** "To get as much experience as they can. Not to be put off by titles or let titles or responsibilities hold them back. In our business people who have the energy, the drive and the capability to do the business will grow very quickly. Don't be put off if you have to start in a position that sounds less than perhaps what you wanted."

**Vaughn:** Why do you think that the MPI student membership isn't any larger than it is?

**St. Martin:** "We have a very small percentage of student members, and I think that's really by choice. There are so

few students who at a freshman, sophomore or junior level really know that they have an interest in meeting planning or the hotel business. I'd like to see the participation increase locally, and we should work on that."

*Vaughn:* Is there anything else you would like to address to MPI members?

*St. Martin:* "I'd like to say to the supplier members that perhaps we need to address how we feel about what MPI is. There are many supplier members who join thinking that the reason they joined is to get business for their companies, and they go after it in a very almost crass way, and they feel disappointed if they go to a local meeting and they don't come back with new or tentative business. That is what's turning off some meeting planners, and my advice to the supplier members is that if you will get involved, if you will openly participate in activities and share your knowledge, by sheer benefit of doing that . . . you WILL do business with the members, and you WILL establish that rapport and build a much firmer foundation for doing your business in the future."

"On the planner side, I'd like to say that it's the other way around. Get involved with the supplier members and don't automatically assume that the only reason they are there is to do business because there are a lot of suppliers who feel as I do, which is that MPI is an opportunity for us to grow together and learn together. There are a lot of things that we supplier members have to offer, and there are a lot of ways we can help planner members make their job so much easier. What it all comes down to is integrity, trust and honesty. If both sides can have that with one another, then we become team members to accomplish a goal . . . which is a successful meeting, and everyone comes out a winner."



*Bill Flannery addresses joint M.P.I. and D/FW Society of Association Executives meeting at the Wyndham.*

## OFF SITE CATERING DALLAS STYLE . . . NO PICNIC

by  
*Penny Yost*

For those of us that have difficulty planning and executing dinner for two, the following should be very interesting. While we don't expect the Marriott's "outside catering" operation will make the weekend chef feel inferior, we do think it would raise the eyebrows of most convention and conference managers.

The Marriott Hotel Market Center is by no means the only off site or "outside" caterer in Dallas and Ft. Worth. However, they have a number of experiences that make their operation unique and well-respected. The expertise they have developed in the field is matched by few other hotels. For this reason, we turned to the staff of the Marriott for an outline of the considerations and problems that need to be faced in planning a meal away from the "Grand Ballroom".

Marriott's staff has catered meals for as many as 8000 people at Mary Kay's annual seminar. They also regularly cater to corporate office and management luncheons at Mary Kay's headquarters. Birthday parties and charity benefit receptions round out the range of activities they coordinate and create. From this, they have learned that caterers that run hotels and also do outside catering are in a position to offer numerous incentives to meeting planners, due to their purchasing power, availability of equipment, professional management and reputation. These factors represent good bonuses to a meeting planner when it comes to budgeting for a major outside event. Catering Sales Manager, Cindy Lanphere, offers: "The clout that a large catering operation carries when purchasing food, beverage, and equipment, allow that caterer to operate at a very competitive price. In addition, the operation has the ability to draw equipment and well trained staff that is readily accessible and, in general, "full-time". The equipment is in itself a major factor, as it will save rental costs which a small operation would have to pass on to the purchaser. But most importantly, the Hotel Caterer offers a true value. The price that is paid to a major caterer is paid back many times over by the level of service, food quality, and overall professionalism of the hotel staff. In this regard, an operation is also able to lure top management personnel from other properties within the chain or recruit from without. When planning an exceptionally large event, this will be important because of the large amount of supervision required."

There are other areas besides catering to large conventions that a hotel catering department can service. Earlier in this article, we mentioned that Marriott regularly caters at the Mary Kay headquarters, and in fact, also at Mary Kay's home. But, would you expect that the recent Southwestern Bell telephone strike presented a catering opportunity? Phil Davis, food and beverage director, at the Marriott Hotel, explained the recent challenges of serving four meals a day for up to 1450 southwest supervisors in nine separate locations. "With eighteen hours notice, Marriott was able to move in managers from across the country, including one from Point Clear, Alabama . . . wherever that is. We quickly geared up the staff and served the first of many meals right on time."

In summing up what planners need to look for, Ms. Lanphere points out that when reviewing caterers, "It is important that you determine the type of service they are accustomed to providing. If their specialty is barbecue, they may not be well equipped to handle a sit down china service. A good catering service is one that is flexible and strives to provide food service which will enhance the purpose of your meeting, rather than distract from it. On the other hand, you should be suspect of a caterer who agrees to your every suggestion. This is a sign that they may not be realistic about their own capabilities and this could lead to problems as well."

"Ultimately, you should select the caterer with which you feel the most comfortable. But, don't let the catering department of a major hotel remain an untapped resource."



**FUTURE MEETING  
SCHEDULE**

**Monday, December 12**  
Dinner/Dancing/Show –  
Sheraton Dallas  
"Over the River and Through  
the Woods . . ."  
An old-fashioned country  
Christmas featuring a showcase  
of local entertainment.

**Thursday, January 26**  
Breakfast Meeting –  
Jarvey House Hotel LBJ Frwy  
"Technology and the  
Meeting Planner"

**Thursday, February 23**  
Dinner –  
D/FW Airport Hilton &  
Conference Center  
TBA

**Thursday, March 23**  
(Tentative) Evening Function  
Dallas Museum of Fine Arts  
TBA

**Thursday, April 26**  
Evening –  
Las Colinas Sports Club/Mandalay  
"Planning Meetings with Health  
in Mind"

**Thursday, May 24**  
Luncheon – Loews Anatole  
"The Republican National  
Convention – A Unique  
Planning Challenge"  
*Special Note:*  
Election of Officers

**Thursday, June 28**  
Luncheon – TBA

**KERSHNER  
PRESENTS  
"HERO AWARDS"  
TO METROPLEX  
CHAPTER**

*The following article appeared in our  
December 1979 Newsletter. We thought  
our "newer" members would be interested  
in some of the Chapter's past achieve-  
ments and "older" members would enjoy  
recalling the special contributions that we  
have made to M.P.I.*

Marion Kershner, Executive Vice President  
of Meeting Planners International, made a  
special Dallas trip to attend the September  
Metroplex Chapter Dinner Meeting held  
at the Fairmont Hotel.

During the meeting, Marion Kershner pre-  
sented to the Fairmont Hotel, on behalf of  
the MPI Board of Directors, a "Special  
Hotel Award" and proclamation, resolving  
that the " . . . Fairmont Hotel, Dallas,  
Texas be recognized by one and all for  
the superior and exemplary performance  
of duties during the 1979 MPI Con-  
ference."

Additionally, special "HERO" certificates  
were presented to Metroplex Chapter  
members " . . . attesting to the member's  
dedication to the society in an outstanding  
performance above and beyond the call of  
duty." Recipients of the "HERO" certi-  
ficates were:

- |                |                                 |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| Ron Trammel    | Mary Kay Cosmetics              |
| Rick Alexander | Rockwell International          |
| Bill Masheter  | Bauer Audio-Visual              |
| Susie Oliver   | Dallas Convention Bureau        |
| Greg Elam      | Great American<br>Insurance Co. |
| Dick Covert    | Dallas Apartment Association    |

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- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Donna Davis          | Fairmont Hotel                              |
| Pat Watson           | Personal Tour Service                       |
| Kathy Clark          | Airport Marina Hotel                        |
| Ellen Beckert        | AVW Audio Visual, Inc.                      |
| Bill McBride         | Freeman Decorating                          |
| George Gallagher     | Association of Drilled<br>Shaft Contractors |
| Charlotte St. Martin | Loew's Anatole                              |
| Michael Stajdel      | Fairmont Hotel                              |
| Evelyn Flores        | Greyhound Exposition                        |
| Marilyn McGuire      | Tx Credit Union League                      |
| Bill Boyd            | Vanguard Travel, Inc.                       |
| Bob Mitchell         | Fairmont Hotel                              |

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