

Volume 28, Number 4
July/August 2006

on your agenda

- 2 Chapter Leadership Conference
- 3 President's Column
- 4 Planner Profile
- 5 Creating Career Pathways
- 6 From the Editor's Desk
- 8 MPI Awards Gala
- 11 WEC: The Excitement & Expectations
- 12 Food for Thought
- 14 Getting Smart with MPI
- 16 New Members
- 18 Managing Conflict
- 21 To Pack ... or Not to Pack
- 23 Share Your Passion
- 24 On the Mooove
- 25 Supplier Profile
- 26 Finances Are Fun
- 28 Calendar of Events

The Power of Membership

► **Susan Arts, CMP**
SC Johnson & Son, Inc.
Racine, WI



Behold, the power of ...

I bet you were thinking “cheese” as the next word! While that delectable dairy product has certainly put Wisconsin on the map, and we could come up with an entire story on it, the real power I am referring to is membership. It is your membership – how powerful is it?

The power of your membership lies in how you use it. What is your personal return on investment (ROI)? Not the ROI for your company, your department, or your boss. For you! What do you get out of it? Here are just a few benefits to think about:

Planners

- Professional education on the industry's hot topics
- Networking with others in your field
- Earning your professional designation (CMP, CMM)

Suppliers

- Expanding your client base
- Showcasing your property as a meeting host
- Learning the “lingo” that your clients are speaking

Students

- Practical experience in a growing field
- Exposure to different aspects of the meeting planning profession

- Meeting professionals who are actually doing what you are learning

Faculty

- Access to professionals who can provide “real life” examples to students
- Network to help develop and review curriculum
- White papers and articles to supplement course work

One of the best ways to maximize your personal ROI is to get involved and volunteer for a committee. Here are what some current chapter members get out of their volunteer activities and their membership.

“The reason that I volunteer for MPI is because I believe that it has been proven over and over that the more involved you are with your association, and the more you put into it; the more you will get out of it. You can get a lot out of MPI by learning about that current meeting's topic, and meeting a few new people; but you will get so much more if you are behind the scenes helping out, constantly networking with professionals in your industry, adding to the association, instead of just being a part of it.”

—Andrew Aschenbrenner
Director of Sales & Marketing
Carey Worldwide Chauffeured Services

“Volunteering with MPI-WI provides me with the opportunity to further my knowledge of the meeting industry on both the local and national level, along with the opportunity to meet with influential members on both sides of the aisle – planners and suppliers.”

—John Dorgan, Sales Manager
Best Western Bridgewood Resort
Hotel & Conference Center

“When I joined MPI I wanted to put myself in a position to achieve the best benefit I could from the organization. To achieve this goal I decided to volunteer as that puts you in a position to not only meet and network with people, but to meet and network with people who are leaders in my chapter. Meeting and networking with leadership is always a good idea as there are unlimited benefits.”

—Linda DuPont
Aurora Health Care
CME Specialist

“Some of my best relationships have stemmed from volunteering for one thing or another, personally and/or professionally. Why? I guess a sense of belonging, or feeling like you are part of something important and meaningful. I am proud to be a part of MPI.”

—Jeri Lyn Kirchner
Senior Sales Manager
Tundra Lodge Resort

CLC Introduces Blue Ocean Strategy

► **Laura Cornell**

*Monona Terrace Convention Center
Madison, WI*



In the last weekend in April, a delegation of chapter leaders flew into Dallas, Texas for the annual Chapter Leadership Conference or "CLC" as it has been referred to in the past. The group that attended was Steve Lorenz, CMP, Laura Cornell, Carrie Jensen, CMP, Mae Ibe, Susan Arts, CMP, and Christopher Dyer.

Historically this has been the time for chapter leaders to meet and share best practices utilized by all of the different chapters and clubs. This really is the best part of the conference. So much information is exchanged and gathered that the benefit to the attendees is huge. Ultimately this information is either used directly or can be used as a starting point for improvements to the business plan for our very own chapter. So many good ideas come back from this meeting and so much sharing is accomplished that the intensive two-day program is quite exhausting.

This is also a time for MPI headquarters staff to alert the attendees to the direction that international is taking – time for the MPI message to be revealed and repeated. This year the message was MPI Member Solutions, MPI Member Solutions, and MPI Member Solutions. If you haven't filled out your skills assessment, please do so. The message being promoted was that by taking this assessment, whether you are a planner or a supplier, you will be part of the movement of global legitimization of the meeting and events industry as a profession. The analogy used was that 20 years ago the Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) designation was unknown and now it has come to be representative of a core of knowledge and a certain level of respect in our industry. I thought this was an interesting way to look at it. It might be hard to see the value now, but by doing your part you are ensuring the longevity of our industry.

The other "small" tidbit of information shared was that the international leadership announced funding for travel expenses at future CLC's would be reduced from four delegates per chapter to two. This is a blow to our chapter as we already had our budget submitted and approved by international, and did not have the additional positions budgeted. As imagined, this has sent a ripple throughout all of the chapters present and MPI International assures us they are using the Blue Ocean Strategy to figure out ways to reallocate the savings they will realize with these cuts. This Blue Ocean concept is one that we'll all hear more about as it's a systematic approach to strategic thinking in order to have "sustained, profitable growth."

In any case, this year's 2006 Chapter Leadership Conference was a great meeting of the minds and we'll see where the 'blue ocean' takes us. ■



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President's Column

"HOW DID I GET HERE?"

► **Steve Lorenz, CMP**
2006-2007 MPI-WI President
Wisconsin Medical Society
Madison, WI



Who would have guessed

back in 1997, when my boss at the time took me to an event for MPI-WI Chapter as a guest, that in 2006 I would be writing the President's Column for the Agenda?

The event was an awards night. I really only knew my boss, but recognized some of the names and a few of our clients. I was somewhat starstruck and intimidated. The outgoing President, who I had heard of but never officially met, held the audience enthralled during her speech. I was impressed at the amount of charisma and polish that it must take to lead such an organization. I thought that it must be a great feeling to know that this entire group of people supported her and looked to her for leadership. There was no way I would ever be able to do something like that.

Fast forward to 1998. I was again registered as a guest, but that same boss bailed on me at the last minute and sent me on my own. I knew a few more people than I thought I would, but was still intimidated by those I did not know. "Networking" was not my strong point and, believe it or not, I was quite shy. I stayed through the event, but bolted as soon as it ended.

My story probably really began when I became an official member in 1999 and attended meetings more regularly. As I began to interact more with my fellow members, I found them to be

very pleasant, down-to-earth and generally enthusiastic toward the organization and the industry.

I attended the education event in June 2000; there the President-Elect was describing a new committee being formed that would focus on meetings industry outreach with colleges regarding education. I was intrigued, so I summoned all of my courage and approached the President-Elect (a well-known planner) about the opportunity. Before I knew what was happening, I was the committee.

I participated alongside people that I knew to be some of the industry's local heavy hitters. I was intimidated sitting at that table, but excited by the tasks before us. I hoped I would not make myself look like an idiot or hold the team back.

I served on the College to Business Advisory Committee for three years and was honored to be part of the team initiated by MPI-WI Chapter to launch a two-year associate degree program. The team was recognized with a President's Award, a Special Education Award and earned a Special Projects Award for the Chapter from International.

During my participation on the committee, I was nominated as a candidate for the Board of Directors. I was terrified. I had no business serving in such a role. I barely knew what I was doing on the committee.

I accepted the nomination and completed the paperwork figuring that it did not really matter, because surely I would not be elected to the position.

I received a call several weeks later informing me that I had been elected to the Board of Directors as a Supplier Director. After mentally questioning my participation in an organization that would have me as a leader, I decided that, even though someone had made a big mistake putting me in the role, I would do the best job I could.

I successfully sat for my Certified Meeting Professional exam in 2002. One of my mentors strongly recommended several times, and in no uncertain terms, I should earn the designation and do it soon. I still think she had precognitive abilities because, two months after earning the designation, I left my job as a supplier and took a job as a planner that required a CMP in its qualifications.

In 2004, I was invited to participate at MATC in the Meeting and Event Degree Program as a part-time instructor. This was a direct result of my involvement with the team that developed the degree in conjunction with MATC. This opportunity has been extremely rewarding for me personally and I hope for the students, as well.

At the end of my initial two year term; I was nominated

and again elected to the Board, this time as Vice President Education. This year was probably the most challenging of my volunteer career to date, and one of the reasons, I was so honored and surprised to be awarded Planner of the Year last year.

I was nominated to serve as President-Elect for this past year. While I could not believe after all this time someone had not caught onto the fact that a mistake had been made years before, I accepted the nomination, knowing the next three years would push me farther outside my comfort zone than any of my other volunteer roles.

That is how I got here. I joined the association, but my membership did not yield strong rewards until I became involved as a volunteer. I then challenged myself and the teams that I was a part of to do our best. I pushed passed my own personal boundaries and continue to do so. I have strong mentors and peers to help me and am lucky to count many of them as friends. I was able to take advantage of new opportunities as a direct result of my participation in MPI-WI. I look forward to the future to see what it holds for our organization and our industry as a whole and appreciate the honor you have entrusted to me for the next year.

How will you get here? What will your story sound like? ■

2006-2007

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Planner Profile: Kristina Barbier

► Kristina Barbier

Executive Secretary
Wausau Signature Agency (WSA)
Wausau, WI



How long in the meetings industry?

I have been in the meeting industry for 8½ years. I support the president of my company; and with each promotion he received on his way up the corporate ladder, new planning opportunities have evolved for me, which allowed me to increase my knowledge base and skills. I started with departmental and client meetings and expanded to include event and conference planning. I am fortunate to work for someone who really appreciates a well-planned event and supports my quest to enhance my abilities, which is why I joined MPI.

How long in MPI?

Joined in April.

Dream Vacation: Taking my family to an island paradise (with ocean view and pristine beaches).

Where do you currently live?

I live just outside the city limits of Wausau, which offers a country feel, but with city convenience ... deer in the backyard and yet the luxury of paved roads! Wausau is a great place to raise a family.

Favorite Pastimes: Snuggle time with my family, reading, walking and listening to a variety of music.

Family: Happily married to my Boy Scout (Rob) and blessed with four beautiful children — Jessica (24), Steven (11), Kelly (8) and Spencer. Every woman should be so lucky to marry a Boy Scout, they are always prepared! Especially my

Rob, he's an Eagle Scout! He can fix just about anything with a little ingenuity, duct tape and spray foam!

Where were you born? Born and raised in the Wausau area. I've never lived more than twenty miles from downtown Wausau.

Favorite Musical Group:

Alison Krauss and Union Station, Barlow Girl

Teams or projects that you have worked on for MPI or would like to be involved with:

I haven't had a chance to explore my options yet and am looking forward to creating new friendships and learning new things.

Person you admire most and why:

My son Spencer. When my beautiful boy was born, doctors gave him a life expectancy of six to nine months. Surrounded by faith, love and hope, our "lit'l man" (with the drive of the Energizer Bunny) kept beating the challenges that were placed before him time and time again (much to the amazement of many, especially the medical community). For 3½ years, he was a testament to all those around us on what the love of family and faith in God can do. Spencer gave faith to those who had none. With only the abilities of a baby, he gave pure love with smiles and giggles. It was impossible to have a bad day when Spencer flashed his beautiful baby blues at you — he was a testament to the fact that each day is a blessing and should be celebrated!

Spencer was raised to glory on December 5, 2004. Some people have said what a lucky boy Spencer was to have such an amazing family, and to them I say, "No, I was the lucky one because I got picked by God to be his Mom."

If I won the lottery I would:

We would start a foundation in Spencer's memory to help children, buy my Mom a new house, pay some bills, stock up my husband's supply of spray foam and duct tape, and put the rest in the bank.

Words to live by: The words I live by are, "Roll baby, roll!" We would lay Spencer on his baby blanket on the living room floor and he would roll off the blanket onto the carpet, plant his nose in the carpet, and then he would grin from ear-to-ear and giggle (it was the "great escape" and you had a sense that he felt he pulled a whopper of a joke on Mom & Dad) ... he was doing something he loved and he did it every chance he got! So roll baby, roll — do what you love every chance you get!

Special personal accomplishments: My attitude is always "the glass is half full" and I always find at least one positive attribute about everyone I meet so that my "glass is never half empty." Every relationship I have started with a positive attitude.

What else would you like other MPI members to know about you? Do the best with what you have. You will be a better person just because you tried.

Creating Career Pathways

► **Marie Johnson**
Midwest Airlines
Milwaukee, WI

I know you've all heard about the new Skills Assessment offered as part of your MPI membership. Kim Marie Ball, CMP – Immediate-Past President, has been harping on all of us to complete the assessment. As of June 20, 2006, our MPI-WI Chapter had a 43% completion rate which placed us third among all our competing chapters. Kim was hoping for a first place finish – but third is not a bad effort.

For those of you not familiar with the instrument, MPI Professional Pathways is a suite of online personalized products and services to meet the career growth and resource needs of meeting professionals. It includes My Skills Assessment, My Gap Report and My Recommended Resources.

I took the Skills Assessment and thought I would share few thoughts and insights. This online assessment tool helped me identify my current proficiency level in over 160 skills in 13 Skill Families. After I completed the assessment, I selected a job description that best matches my current job or the job to which I aspire and compared my skills to the industry standard skills for that job reported in My Gap Report. The industry standard reflects the benchmark established by the 1,200 planners that MPI surveyed to identify skill proficiencies.

For my selected job, I choose Corporate Meeting Planner. A downside of the tool currently is that it does not have job

description for our supplier members. However, I believe this is an addition to come in the future. You can generate a report which reveals your "skill gap distribution" for each skill family and compares your proficiency rating for each skill to the level required for this job, based on industry standards. Green represents the percentage of skills in which you exceed the industry standard for that skill family; yellow represents the percentage of skills in which you match the industry standard; and red represents the percentage skills in which you fall below the industry standard. Gray represents the skills that you have not yet completed.

You may go back to your Skills Assessment and complete the remaining questions to eliminate gray areas.

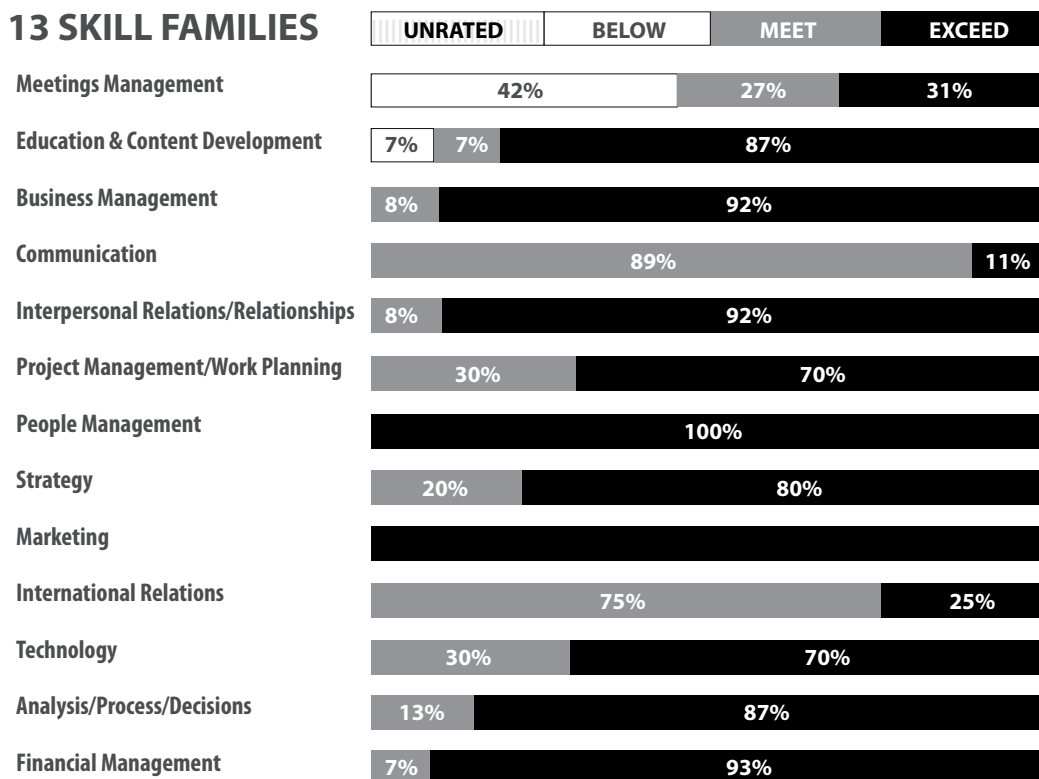
I was also provided a customized Recommended List of Resources (books, articles, educational offerings, etc.) based on the Skills Assessment results revealed in My Gap Report. I was then able to compare my results from the Skills Assessment with all of the job descriptions in the Job Selection list, to help me identify the job that best fits my current skills.

Lastly, I was able to review My Job Best Fit. This report is

intended to serve as a guide to help me identify jobs to which I might want to look at more closely. I learned more about specific jobs and was able to view full job descriptions on the Job Selection page. If you haven't taken the Skills Assessment, I encourage you to go online to www.mpiweb.org and check it out.

MPI will continue to build on the Skills Assessment and is soon releasing a Planner Style Survey. Determine if your personality and behavioral traits match up against those of a meeting planner to see if this would be the right career path for you. ■

13 SKILL FAMILIES



agenda staff

Published bi-monthly by
Meeting Professionals
International –
Wisconsin Chapter

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Statements of fact and
opinion within Agenda are
the responsibility of the
author(s) and do not imply
an opinion of the officers
or members of MPI or MPI-
Wisconsin Chapter.

Publication Deadlines:

September/October 2006
Deadline: July 17, 2006

November/December 2006
Deadline: Sep. 18, 2006

January/February 2007
Deadline: Nov. 20, 2006

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From the Editor's Desk

Driven by Deadlines

► Marie Johnson
Midwest Airlines
Milwaukee, WI



Assuming my new role as the Agenda Editor, I couldn't stop thinking about deadlines and all of the small and large details involved in producing a newsletter that is informative, insightful, educational and occasionally humorous.

The term "deadline" refers to a specific time when a project is to be completed. One of my first deadlines was to replace myself and recruit a new Associate Editor for 2006-2007. I am pleased to announce Lisa Lanting, CMP with Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association in Madison rose to the challenge and accepted the position. Please welcome her on board and be sure to check out her article Managing Conflict: Doing Your Part.

As I was migrating onto my next set of tasks, I wondered about the origin of this dreadful word — DEADLINE. Of course, we're all aware it is a publishing term indicating the time after which material will not make it into a newspaper, periodical or the Agenda. For my first edition, I quickly learned our Past-Editor, Tami Gilbertson, CMP had skillfully navigated many deadlines throughout the editorial and production process from determining editorial content, assigning articles, recruiting writers, sending reminders, sending more reminders, writing, proofing, and submitting

copy, collaborating with our designer, reviewing format and ending with the final approval of the finished product.

The word deadline first appeared as an American coinage that referred to the line around a military prison beyond which soliders were authorized to shoot escaping prisoners. According to Lossing's History of the Civil War (1868): "Seventeen feet from the inner stockade was the 'dead-line', over which no man could pass and live." This use is also found in Congressional records as early as 1864.

In the 20th-century, deadline was used as a printing term meaning 'a guideline on the bed of a printing press beyond which text will not print': "Make certain that the type does not come outside of the dead-line on the press." (*Henry, Printing for School & Shop, 1917*).

While there is no evidence to support a firm conclusion on either of these origins, one thing I know for sure is that I am what you would refer to as "deadline driven." With a deadline nearing, I get excited, creative and energized. Of course, this sometimes creates undue pressure and stress if I cut myself too close to the "dead line." Another risk is compromising someone else's deadline down the line. If you are like me, one of the tricks

for balancing this conundrum is to set a new due date or series of deadlines. I tell my boss I will have a draft of the report done a week before the final is actually due so that she has time to review and make any edits. If I say it outloud and commit it to others – it also helps.

I would like to thank all of our contributing writers for their time, expertise and meeting the deadlines. We have a tremendous amount of talent in the ranks of our members – those that submit regular features and articles – and those we hear from on occasion. In this issue you will learn how to make the most of your MPI membership, calculate what it takes to keep our chapter financially sound, get updated on MPI events past and future, share your passion for the industry, manage conflict better and how to avoid "Attire Anxiety" when you finally take that long overdue and well-deserved vacation.

In closing, I encourage each of you to set an important deadline related to MPI. Perhaps, it will be to submit your first article for the Agenda, attend your first MPI-WI Chapter event, or volunteer on a committee. If those are too lofty, read your Agenda from cover to cover and at least let me know what you think. I can be reached at editor@mpiwi.org. ■



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29th Annual MPI Awards Gala

Contributing Authors:

Mae Ibe, Fox Cities CVB, Marie Johnson, Midwest Airlines and Naomi Tucker, CMP, Humana

We definitely did “Swing Back to Classic Elegance at this year’s 29th Annual Awards Gala.” On Thursday, May 18, 2006, the beautiful Osthoff Resort in historic Elkhart Lake was host to 128 of our members and their guests. The most amazing part is there weren’t any no-shows – everyone who registered showed up!

The evening opened with a reception where members were able to mingle over cocktails and hors d’oeuvres. Compliments of Pat Goetzinger’s Photography, our “dressed to the nines” attendees were able to receive a keepsake of the evening.

The dinner and awards presentation was spectacularly orchestrated from all the small touches – like gold wrapped truffles on the place settings – to the significant recognitions and awards presented to our members for their commitment to our industry and their professional contributions to the MPI-WI Chapter.

Industry Partner Award - *Alliant Energy Center*

Industry Advocate Award - *Connie Nau, CMP*

Journalism Award - *Michelle Eggert, CMP*

Team of the Year Award - Agenda Newsletter - *Tami Gilbertson, CMP*

Kristin Bjurstrom Krueger, CMP Scholarship - *Allison McCarty*

MPI-WI Member Grant - *Liz Hesser*

Rising Star Award - *Naomi Tucker, CMP*

Hall of Fame Award - *Marge Anderson*

Supplier of the Year Award - *Carmen Smalley*

Planner of the Year Award - *Kim Marie Ball, CMP*

Over the past year, the following members received their CMP designation. With the addition of these 11 individuals, we now have a total of 43 CMPs/CMMs in our MPI-WI Chapter.

Jodi Brunner, CMP - *United States Bowling Congress*

Peter Duncan, CMP - *Meetings & Incentives*

Cindy Foley, CMP - *Radisson Paper Valley Hotel*

Tami Gilbertson, CMP - *Wisconsin Physician Services*

Lori Jens, CMP - *Meetings & Incentives*

Lisa Lanting, CMP - *Preventive Cardio Nurses Association*

Amy Nowinsky, CMP - *Wausau Financial*

Karen Paglione, CMP - *American Express*

Lynette Resch, CMP - *TDS Telecom*

Jennifer Schell, CMP - *American Express*

Naomi Tucker, CMP - *Humana Inc.*

Additionally, special recognition was given to Gloria Nelson, CSEP. She is the first Wisconsin member to receive the CSEP designation.



Kelly Langenecker and Tina Luther take to the dance floor and enjoy the big band sounds of Mr. Lucky.



Journalism Award winner Michelle Eggert, CMP gushes to Katy Lederer, “I had no idea they’d even called my name!”

The evening continued as attendees listened and danced to the Big Band sounds of Mr. Lucky. And, the grand finale was the long-awaited raffle drawing. Many of our members generously donated prize items. And special “thanks” to all of our sponsors for their cash contributions, services and products. As a result, the MPI-WI Chapter was able to raise \$1,239. A phenomenal number!

RAFFLE ITEMS

Abbott Laboratories – Beverage Cooler
 Abbott Laboratories – Cooler/Champagne Basket
 BBJ Linen – Gift Basket
 Choice Hotels - \$50 Cash Coupon
 David Breen Wines International – Wine Tasting
 and Two Bottles of Wine
 Fox World Travel – Roundtrip Airline Tickets for Two
 Humana, Inc. – Digital Camera
 Humana, Inc. – Golf Package
 Hyatt Regency Milwaukee – Romance Package for
 Two with Breakfast
 Marriott Hotels – 2 Nights Hotel Stay
 Millenium Knickerbocker Hotel – One Night's Stay
 and Two Tickets to King Tut Exhibit
 Oshkosh CVB – Gift Basket with Hotel, Dining and
 EAA Certificates
 Premier Meetings & Incentives – Roundtrip Airline
 Tickets for Two
 Quality Inn and Suites Madison – Overnight Stay
 and \$50 Tuscany Grill Certificate
 Radisson Hotel LaCrosse – Overnight Hotel Stay
 Ramada Hotel – Overnight Stay in Jacuzzi Suite
 and Breakfast for Two
 SC Johnson & Sons – Gift Basket
 Stone Harbor – Overnight Gift Certificate
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*Susan Smolarek & Paula Rusch are all smiles
 wrapped in raffle tickets.*

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McGinley & Baker	
Meetings & Incentives	



Marie Johnson & Susan Kainz attempt the raffle tango.

In closing, we have just a few more folks to thank for pulling off a truly elegant and classic evening. The Award's Committee was chaired by Naomi Tucker, CMP. Her team members were Elizabeth Diggins, Connie Nau, CMP, Meredith Rockafellow, Sarah Tillmar, Kelly Vandenboogart, and Joe Wimberger. Julie Peterman, CMP was the emcee.

Next year will mark the 30th Annual MPI-WI Awards Gala and you won't want to miss it! ■

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WEC: The Excitement & Expectations

► **Alison Barta**
Student
Oxford, WI



Over 3,000 attendees will descend on the home of MPI July 9-12 for the 2006 World Education Congress (WEC). As a second time attendee, I have higher expectations than I did when attending my first WEC last year. Dallas has their work cut out for them in matching or exceeding the experience that Miami provided in 2005. Let's preview what Dallas has in store for us.

Along with top notch education, WEC offers outstanding networking events, a feel for the local culture and a chance to see the wonderful things our fellow MPI members can do. Very few of us get the opportunity to be a part of such an outstanding event.

The first thing to grab your attention will be the mass of people waiting for the doors to the general session to open. Imagine over 3,000 people waiting to get that first glimpse of the expansive stage, to see what this year's hosts have in store. One of the most

Don't miss this wonderful experience and the time to party with friends, old and new.

Be sure to take time to peruse the massive tradeshow floor. Vendors from across the globe come together to showcase their destination, facility and a host of other incredible products. MPIweb has a floor plan available. Take a moment to look it over and map out your route!

Following the tradeshow is another opportunity for you to hear from one of the many world-class speakers that WEC brings together. I cannot think of another place that offers the wide variety of topics and so many industry experts in one place.

New this year is another fundraising event for the MPI Foundation — Texas Hold 'Em. You can be a novice or a practiced poker



Join Meeting Professionals International at the 2006 World Education Congress and discover innovative education, products and services that will provide you with the solutions you need for your future in the meetings industry.

memorable moments of last year's opening session for me was hearing from the International award winners. As a newcomer to the industry, it is great to hear that the sky really is the limit.

Follow the opening session with one of many professional development sessions, all of which include an array of topics aimed at everyone from the beginner to the seasoned professional. Be sure to use MPIweb to help choose a schedule of sessions that is just right for your interests and experience level. Special tracks of sessions have been set up this year for Strategic Meetings Management, Strategic Thinking and Entrepreneurial Business Skills.

To cap off opening day, make sure to take time to attend the opening night reception. Last year's reception welcomed guests with live butterflies in a beautiful cocoon and glass bars that doubled as fish tanks of large tropical fish. The array of hors d'oeuvres and beverages available was astonishing. This year's opening night reception promises a real taste of Dallas at one of Texas' largest Roadhouses ~ Gilley's Dallas.

But don't go home yet, the night is just starting. Head downtown to Rendezvous Dallas at BLUE, downtown Dallas' upscale nightclub. The evening will be filled with jazz, dancing and a whole lot of fun. All proceeds from Rendezvous benefit the MPI Foundation.

player. You do not even need to play to attend. Be sure to sign-up early, this is going to fill up fast.

Monday night also boasts a whole line-up of unadvertised, and even some unplanned, networking events. Many chapters and suppliers alike spend the evening catching up with old friends and making a few new ones.

Tuesday's line-up includes the last of the incredible educational opportunities. Sessions will begin in the morning and run until the closing session at noon. Next year's host destination will wow the crowd with a taste of what is to come. They have big shoes to fill, as last year Dallas put on a great show.

Don't forget to end your time at WEC in Dallas at the closing night celebration. Last year's party included live exotic animals, multiple rooms of various themes and a live performance by Kool & The Gang. This year's event, "Dallas Now, Dallas WOW" promises a look at the culture and art of Dallas, including a live performance by Hootie and the Blowfish.

This extraordinary conference guarantees to create many lasting memories. With education that is second to none and parties that go all night long, the home of MPI will surely impress anyone who has the opportunity to attend. ■

Food for THOUGHT

► **Mary Kay Linari**
Levy Restaurants
Wisconsin Center District
Milwaukee, WI



At 16, working in a small mom and pop short-order restaurant, Mary Kay Linari got her first taste of the food service business. She continued to work in restaurants and put herself through college. Since then her experience has taken her between Milwaukee and Chicago working for the English Room at the Pfister Hotel, the Park East Hotel, Ogden Food Service, Fine Host, and Aramark and Levy Restaurants. She also had couple of diversions along the way; a stint in Arizona selling real estate and operating a sandwich deli, and three wonderful summers in Yellowstone Park dealing with tour groups.

As the Senior Catering Sales Manager she works for the Wisconsin Center District. There is almost never a “dark” day within the three building complex (Midwest Airlines Center, US Cellular Arena and Milwaukee Theatre). Quite often there are events simultaneously in all three. It’s not unusual to have a sold out show in the Milwaukee Theatre, a game in the Arena and a banquet in the Midwest Airlines Center. It makes life interesting!

When asked what she likes most about her job? She replied, “I enjoy meeting and getting to know a wide variety of interesting people from across the state and country. Each group is unique in its requirements and I like the challenge of figuring out how to make it happen.”

She said she will never forget the second day of Rockwell’s 2003 Automation Fair and commented, “We opened the door for lunch to 12,000 people and I was directing people to buffets. The flow of people continued unabated for two hours. We served 27,000 meals over the three day show. The key is flexibility and the ability to think outside the box when doing events that present challenges as this most certainly did.”

One of her favorite events is “Showcase” hosted annually in conjunction with MPI Education Day. The whole Levy team collaborates on coming up with fresh ideas to present for this event. It’s an opportunity for them to try out new things, which they can then implement into their operation.

Levy tries to distinguish itself by enhancing the standard or expected service. For example, all of their Coffee Services come with whipped topping, chocolate shavings, rock sugar & flavorings. Our Carving Stations include the Levy Signature Four Cheese Potato (*see recipe*). An emerging trend is “minis,” from drinks to desserts to main entrees. The Station Buffets or European Stations are no longer limited to single items. They are called Chef’s Tables and provide a “mini” meal. People love trying new things and small portions allow them to sample many unique items without getting overfull. ■

LEVY SIGNATURE FOUR CHEESE POTATOES

9.25 lb russet potatoes, sliced 1/16" thin
4 wt. oz garlic, minced
.5 lb thyme, fresh chopped (or basil)
3 oz salt and pepper
4 qt heavy cream

6 fluid oz. butter, clarified
.5 lb parmesan cheese, grated
.5 lb gouda cheese, grated
.5 lb swiss or gruyere cheese, grated
.25 lb bleu cheese, crumbled

Heat butter in heavy sauce pan. Add garlic and thyme. Saute for 30 seconds. Add cream, salt, and pepper. Bring to a simmer whisking constantly. Reduce by 1/3. Whisk in the eggs, several at a time. Add potatoes and half the cheeses. Brush half pans with butter. Layer potato, cream, egg mixture with cheeses. Pour remaining cream over the potatoes. Top with cheese. Pour remaining cream over the potatoes. Top with cheese. Bake at 325 degrees for 1 hour or tender.

Let cool to room temperature and place parchment paper over potatoes. Place an empty half pan on top of potato gratin and weigh down with a #10 can. Place in refrigerator until ready to reheat. Reheat in a 300 degree oven for 45 minutes or until internal temp reaches 160 degrees.



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Getting Smart with MPI

► **Michelle Eggert, CMP**
*ConferenceDirect
Big Bend, WI*



It's hard to believe that my first year as the Planner Director — Professional Development has been completed. It's even harder to imagine that I need to get in front of the "8 Ball" this year and begin to schedule the speakers for our 2006-2007 education calendar.

The goal of the education team is to secure speakers that equally support the education areas of the professional pathways of MPI.

These pathways are:

Pathway #1 – Professional development pathways and resources that enable members to evolve their careers toward positions or perspectives of strategic understanding & influence

Pathway #2 – Aggressively pursue opportunities to influence executives about the value meetings bring to their organizations

Pathway #3 – Intensify business opportunities for supplier members

Throughout 2005-2006, the education team was pleased to present a variety of topics that met these Pathways through topics on:

- Procurement
- Fundraising & Sponsorship Enhancement
- Interpersonal Relationships
- Strategic Meeting Management
- Media Tips & Tricks
- Planning Accessible Meetings
- How Language Gender & Power Affect What We Understand
- Ethics, Integrity, Credibility & Certainty
- Conflict Resolution
- Menu Selection
- Releasing Our Brilliance
- Gaining a Greater Understanding of Sarbanes Oxley

In 2006-2007 our search is underway for interesting topics and speakers on a variety of topics. Already secured for the November Education Day is James Spellos. Other topics being pursued are:

- Teambuilding for Fun & Profit
- How Can Suppliers and Planners Work Better Together During the Negotiation Phase?
- The Culturally Competent Meeting Professional: Secrets for Success in Cross-Cultural Sales and Customer Service
- Outsourcing for Better Meetings
- The Art & Science of Leveraging Relationships for More Sales & Profits
- Contingency Planning & Crisis Management
- Trends in Event Marketing
- Dining and Business Etiquette

If there are topics or speakers you would like us to consider, please don't hesitate to contact us. We welcome all recommendations and look forward to a fantastic and exciting 2006-2007! ■

2006-2007 EDUCATION CALENDAR

The following dates for the 2006-2007 Education Calendar have been set, so be sure to mark your calendars.

August 17, 2006

Ramada Convention Center
Eau Claire

January 11, 2007

The Abby
Fontana

September 14, 2006

Holiday Inn Wausau/Mosinee
Wausau

February 15, 2007

Wilderness Resort
Wisconsin Dells

October 12, 2006

Fox Hills Resort
Mishicot

April 19, 2007

Stone Harbor
Sturgeon Bay

November 9, 2006

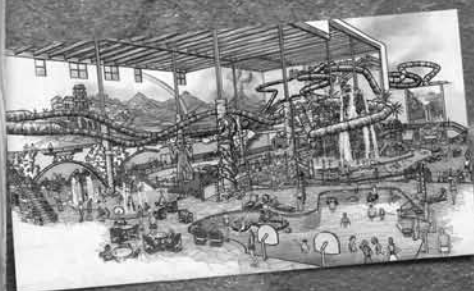
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In Chimera Self Defense, one way to diffuse a dangerous situation is to say or do something unexpected to throw an attacker off guard. By being unpredictable you are less likely to become a victim. Philip Chard calls this “pattern interruption” and it works in everyday conflicts as well. Next time someone tries to provoke you or says something disrespectful, instead of taking the bait, interrupt that pattern with something creative and unexpected. Chard uses an example in a board room setting where someone says to you, “Now that was a stupid idea” and you smile and respond with, “well, it’s funny you mention it, I have been having a lot of those moments lately, maybe I should see someone about it.”

Physiology: Are you aware of what your body language is telling people? Studies have shown that around 93% of communication is based on non-verbal cues; so when you hear one thing and see another ... guess what, it’s best to trust the message that lies in the body language. Chard takes this a step further and says that to manage anxiety, the common denominator among most conflicts, one should focus on his or her physiology. The mind-body connection is so strong that it is possible to change your emotional response to conflict by simply changing the way you carry yourself. Stand up straight, shoulders back, with a confident posture. Breathe deeply and find a centered, grounded place. Smile, make eye contact, and speak clearly, slowly, and with conviction. “Act as if” and your mind will follow your body.

I have another mind-body relaxation technique that I use when I catch myself overreacting or becoming tense: I take a five or ten minute break and sit up straight in my chair, close my eyes, clear my mind, and focus my attention on taking deep, slow, cleansing breaths ... letting the energy of the breath travel through my body like a wave, dissolving all of the tension and negativity, and then releasing it all in the outbreath. It’s amazing how refreshing this can be. Try it!

No matter what techniques work for you, the bottom line is this: it’s worth it to become skilled in managing conflicts. Improving your approach and reaction to perceived conflicts can help you improve relationships, gain support, motivate others, foster creativity, improve morale, and jumpstart productivity. It all depends on which seeds you choose to water. ■

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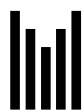
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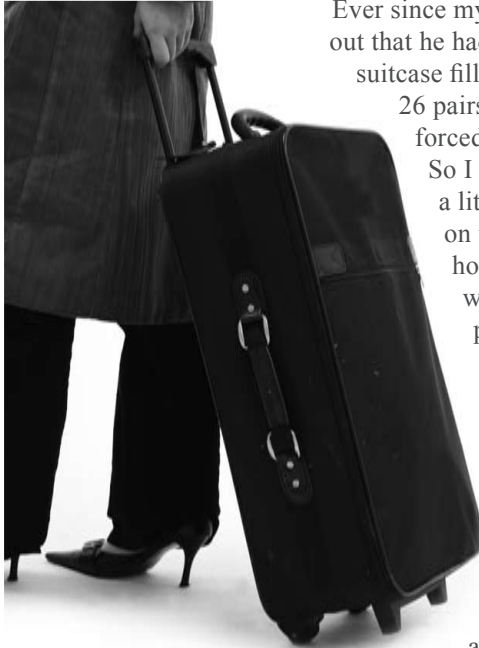
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To Pack ... or Not to Pack

► **Lori A. Fuhrmann**
Four Points Sheraton
Milwaukee Airport
Milwaukee, WI



Packing for a trip, whether it is for personal or business, can be a rather grueling experience. I generally start suffering from “attire anxiety” at least a month out and always have enough clothes packed for a month when only traveling for three days.



Ever since my husband found out that he had carried a heavy suitcase filled with nothing but 26 pairs of shoes, I am now forced to carry my own. So I have learned to be a little more selective on what I pack. I did, however, end up wearing all but one pair on the cruise. I had to or else I would have never heard the end of it.

Helpful hints

Here are a few tips on packing smart and utilizing the

best of your space:

- Roll lingerie and fit into the corners of your suitcase.
- Men, roll your socks by day, inside of underwear and fit into the corners and between rows.
- Wrap belts around the inside walls of your suitcase.
- Stuff the inside of your shoes with small items such as pantyhose, socks, jewelry (not expensive), accessories, etc.
- Pack a neutral sweater or jacket that can be worn with your packed wardrobe.
- Take advantage of the space inside soft-sided carry-on luggage; these can hold a great deal if packed correctly.
- NEVER put expensive jewelry, money or prescription drugs in checked baggage; carry them on the plane with you.
- Keep an extra change of clothes, toiletries and swimwear in your carry-on bag, just in case your luggage enjoys a different destination than you do, temporarily ...
- Place luggage straps securely around your checked baggage. Many times your luggage is airborne prior to the flight. Have you ever watched them load luggage on to a plane?

- Report any luggage damage immediately to the airline passenger service manager and fill out a report.
- Take a picture of your luggage prior to your trip and bring it with you in your carry-on bag. This will help expedite the retrieval of lost luggage.
- Put perfumes/colognes in sealable plastic bags to avoid spillage. Do the same with toothpaste, body cremes, hairspray, etc. If you have ever gotten somewhere and started to unpack and found that one of the above exploded or leaked, you know what I am talking about.
- Have baggage ID tags secured to all pieces, even your carry-on bag and laptop, including your full name, current address, cell phone, and e-mail if desired.

Coping with jet lag

“Time Zone Blues,” the symptoms of jet lag, are well known to international travelers everywhere who step off of flights in strange cities. Jet lag manifests itself in different ways and is usually accompanied by disorientation, drowsiness throughout the day, hunger at strange hours and the inability to sleep normally. Some travelers become irritable and most have trouble concentrating.

If any of the above symptoms sound familiar, here are some helpful hints to consider:

- Drink lots of water on a flight.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages, or at least drink in moderation. (*Okay, I know this is MPI that I am writing for, but a good tip, none-the-less*)
- Set your watch to the time zone of your destination and try adjusting your sleep schedule ahead of time, to become accustomed to the new time.
- Upon arrival, do whatever is normal for that time of day there.
- Get exposure to daylight and stay active and functioning normally according to the time day.
- Eat lightly on flights. (Like nothing has changed here ...)
- Avoid caffeine at wrong times.
- Listen to relaxing music on your in-flight headset when trying to fall asleep.
- Watch back-to-back movies that you would not have time to do at home. All the way to Germany and back I watched all of the animated movies that I had been wanting to see for a long time such as “It’s a Bugs Life”, Shrek II, etc ... I had a great time all by myself! ■

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► **Elizabeth Bremer, CMP**

*Direct Supply, Inc.
Milwaukee, WI*

Waukesha County Technical College is about to start another year of the very successful Meeting and Event Management certificate program. This program was created to train aspiring meeting planners and has also helped increase the knowledge and experience level of hospitality, business, marketing and administration students. These students of all ages love to hear from, and learn the most from, those "in the trenches."

Would you consider sharing your passion with the students as a guest speaker, a guest lecturer or perhaps allow a student to job shadow you for a few hours? Many opportunities are available to help train this next generation of meeting and event planners. The certificate program teaches the core skills meeting planners need through these five classes spread over the course of one year.

1. **Fundamentals of Meeting Management** introduces the students to the meeting industry and the wide variety of careers available.
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3. **Transportation, Registration and Housing** digs deeper into each of these areas to teach students how to create a seamless meeting experience.
4. **Incentive and Special Events Management** students spend the semester creating their own unique event incorporating themes, décor, entertainment, and marketing.
5. **Risk Management, Negotiations and Legal Issues** discusses contracts, contract clauses, negotiating skills, crisis planning and labor issues.

Reading this list, did you notice any areas of interest or expertise? Perhaps this would also be an excellent opportunity to fine tune your presentation skills. Presentation format is very flexible — come for 20 minutes or stay for the entire class; teach a specific topic or lead the class in a group activity; prepare a formal presentation or speak directly from the heart.

Please take a moment to consider sharing your expertise and passion. Classes are typically Tuesday and Thursday evenings. If you would like to be involved, or have any questions, please contact Liz Bremer at 414-760-5802 or lbremer@directs.com.

Thank you!

On The Mooove

► **Lori A. Fuhrmann**
Four Points by Sheraton
Milwaukee Airport



As the world turns ... so does the hospitality industry ...

Carmen, Carmen, Carmen, how can you leave us?? A HUGE "CONGRATULATIONS" to Carmen Smalley who has accepted a position at the Peery Hotel in Salt Lake City as Director of Sales and Marketing and will start on June 5th, 2006! Carmen was also recently awarded the 2005 Distinguished Sales and Marketing Award from SMEI (Sales and Marketing Executives International)! You go girl! Best of wishes from all of us on your move to Utah and stay in touch! Safe Travels.

Deborah DiMarzo was with the Four Points by Sheraton

Milwaukee Airport as Director of Sales and Marketing for two years and has accepted the Director of Sales Position at the Hilton Milwaukee City Center!! Best of luck to you Deborah!!

And ... I hear that a few of our members, Sue Lidstrom and Tracy Troth are expecting babies. Congratulations!

If you have any news to share or know of anyone "on the move" please send me an e-mail at lfuhrmann@fourpointsmilwaukeeairport.com. (Should I have tried for a longer e-mail address?)

Hope your summer is going well!

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Oh, and just so attendees may plan ahead, warn them the kids will want to come, too. Suggest they position it as a "summer vacation." You know, the one that never happened because Mom and Dad were just too busy with work. Pleasantly ironic, isn't it? Wonders never cease in "The Waterpark Capital of the World!™"



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Supplier Profile:

Patricia A. Kemner

► **Patricia A. Kemner**
Sales Manager
Westwood Conference Center
Wausau, WI



Name: Patricia A. Kemner

Place of Employment:

Westwood Conference Center,
Wausau, WI.
www.westwoodconference.com

Job Title: Sales Manager

How long in the meetings industry? 15 years

How long in MPI? April 2006

Where were you born?

Dubuque, Iowa

If I won the lottery I would:

Volunteer at St. Jude's Hospital and make the children's time precious and special.

Person you admire most

and why: Ron Vaughan, one of my old bosses, was the first person that I worked with in the business. He taught me customers were always first, and if you make their meeting perfect and effortless – they will always remember that and you will always have repeat business. Build trust and relationships with all your customers.

Special personal accomplishments:

Two beautiful children, a great husband and a great career.

Family: Husband of 2 ½ years – one son and one daughter.

Words to live by: When you wake up each day, live it to the fullest like it was your last on this earth.

Teams or projects that you have worked on for MPI or would like to be involved with:

I would like to get involved with voluntary projects, I seen how everyone that was involved at the May function makes a big difference and that is what I want to do is make a difference.

Where do you currently live?

Wausau, WI

Dream Vacation:

4 weeks touring Europe.

Favorite Pastimes: riding motorcycles, reading, dancing, floral designing.

What else would you like other MPI members to know about you?

I have been in the hotel and conferencing business for 15 plus years. I strive to put all my customers first. And again, it comes to creating trust and building a relationship with them. I want to make sure all their meetings are effortless and it is a memorable experience for them.

Favorite Musical Group:

Enya



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Finances Are FUN



► **Mae Ibe**
Fox Cities CVB
Appleton, WI

In my real life as a Sales Director, the "FUN" of finances consists of spending money (this is what my supervisor claims).

At least, that is what I was told when I accepted the role as your VP of Finance for the 2006-2007 fiscal year. Now, Heather Dyer might think finances are fun, but most would be hard pressed to find many people who will agree.

- Strategic alliance sponsorships \$5,000
- Raffle income per month \$350

Now keep in mind, this is revenue. Expenses are just as deep in our pockets, if not more.

In my real life as a Sales Director, the "FUN" of finances consists of spending money (this is what my supervisor claims). Sounds like the average American, doesn't it? Thank goodness for Heather Dyer & Paulette Heney, CMM who have gotten me on the right track of understanding the financial state of the chapter.

The chapter cannot reach these goals without the support of our members! Please do your part to help keep our chapter financially successful. Whether buying extra raffle tickets, purchasing advertising, or donating services and prizes to our special events, everyone can help.

MPI-WI Chapter is financially strong. We have a very aggressive budget going into the fiscal year, but the board is confident the set goals are attainable. Some key revenue goals include:

In closing, I would like to thank Paulette Heney, CMM for the contributions to the chapter as your 2005-2006 VP of Finance. She did a tremendous job at keeping us on track, and I wish her success as she begins her term as your President-Elect.

- Annual meeting revenues \$87,875 (Education days & monthly programs)
- Annual advertising revenue \$61,300
- Net profit \$5,000 for each special event fundraiser (Holiday Party & Golf Outing)

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at any time.
mibe@foxcities.org or
920-734-3358. ■

“Volunteering has proven extremely beneficial in getting to know more of our members one on one. Names now have familiar faces to go with them. I truly feel the benefit of my membership a whole lot more as I get to know our members & my involvement with the Retention Committee makes it so much easier to make that connection.”

—Katy Lederer

Director of Catering

Radisson Hotel Milwaukee West

The Wisconsin chapter is proud to have an active, dedicated volunteer corps. In 2005-2006, over 70 chapter members were involved on the different committees. If you have just an hour a week (or more!) to

dedicate to your membership, we can find a committee that needs you.

The chapter has four divisions: Communications, Education, Finance and Membership.

The committees within the divisions include:

Communications – Agenda newsletter, Community Outreach, Website, Advocacy and Public Relations.

Education – Each monthly program has a committee, plus the two education days.

Finance – Strategic Alliances, Partnership Marketing, Holiday Party, Awards Banquet, Fundraising and the Golf Outing

Membership – Recruitment, Retention, Mentor Program, Awards and Scholarships
Between all these different areas, there are over 100 volunteer opportunities available ... and we can find one that fits you! So if you haven't gotten involved in the past, or want to try something new for this year, please contact me at leadership@mpiwi.org or at 262/260-2783.

Let this year be all about you – expand your horizons, learn new things, meet new people, make new friends. All by volunteering for your MPI-WI Chapter. ■



Advertising Index

Abbey Group Resorts	23
Advanced Center for Training	19
Chula Vista	15
Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa	17
Fox Cities CVB	10
Grand River Center	2
Hilton Milwaukee City Center	28
Hotel Mead	26
LaCrosse Area CVB	10
Lake Lawn Resort	16
Lambeau Field Atrium	13
Madison Concourse Hotel	22
Madison Marriott West	17
Millennium Hotels	20
Monona Terrace	7
PC/Name tag	24
Radisson Paper Valley	25
Stevens Point CVB	22
Wausau/Central WI CVB	27
Wisconsin Dells Visitor & CVB ...	24

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Datebook: Calendar of Events

JULY

9-11 MPI International World Education Congress

Dallas, TX
www.mpiweb.org

12 Certified Association Sales Executive (CASE) Course

PCMA Learning Center - Course
Course Begins (Conference Call):
July 12, 2006 - 3PM ET
Course Ends (Online Content):
September 12, 2006
Review & Exam (Chicago, IL):
September 25, 2006

AUGUST

17 MPI-WI Meeting

Ramada Convention Center
Eau Claire, WI
www.mpiwi.org

19-22 ASAE and the Center for Association Leadership

Boston, MA
www.asaecenter.org

SEPTEMBER

14 MPI-WI Meeting

Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites
Wausau, WI
www.mpiwi.org



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