

Agenda



Paulette Heney, CMM receives
the Planner of the Year award
from Wisconsin National
Speakers Association
President Mark Borowski



Also in this issue:

- 15 New Strategies for Business Partnership
- 26 Staying on Top of Your Game

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Correction: The photo on page 17 of the Nov/Dec issue should have the caption: *Patricia, Amanda, Shannon and Wanda share laughs over cocktails. Also the article on page 15 was written by Michelle Reed and on page 25-26 by Sue Lidstrom.*



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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Happy New Year MPI-WI!



Michelle Reed is the Meetings Manager for Association Acumen, a full service association management company that provides staff leadership and support for non-profit membership associations in Wisconsin, the U.S. and internationally.

It is a time for resolutions and making promises to ourselves on ways to improve our lives, families and careers. Every December/January I seem to take a moment to reflect on the past year and make a mental list of what I want to achieve in the New Year—eat healthier, volunteer more, redecorate my home, etc. Now, don't be fooled, rarely do I check many things off of this list as completed, but I do think that it is a great way to stay grounded and in-touch with who we are and where we are headed.

This year I resolved to improve my business relationships with vendors, partners and colleagues. There are a lot of great networking opportunities out there and even if there isn't an immediate need for a business connection, there may be one in the future and who knows, a friendship may even form. I am going to try to attend more MPI-WI events and perhaps join another committee. I would also like to explore the MPI and ASAE websites and utilize their great resources. We are all bombarded with emails detailing the benefits of membership in professional organizations, but how often do we take the time to follow the links and take advantage of the opportunities provided to us?

I am also resolved to ensure that important people in my life realize their importance to me. My friends and family are constant reminders of who I am and help me see that no matter what happens I am always welcome for who I am when I am with them. All too often I think we take our friends and family for granted and in 2009 I pledge to be more conscience of this. One way I will try to achieve this is by sending everyone a physical birthday card on their big day instead of one of those expected online greeting cards. (Remember how exciting it is to get actual mail in your mailbox that is not a bill??) Sometimes I really do believe that it is the little things that truly matter.

I hope that you can glean some resolutions or ideas of your own from this *Agenda* newsletter. With technology seemingly taking over the world, I think it is important to stop and realize that nothing can replace human interaction. I hope we can all take a moment to reflect about the people in our lives and build upon our relationships in 2009.

Best wishes for a prosperous and successful New Year!

Michelle

THE VALUE OF YOUR MPI MEMBERSHIP

The Economy. You hear about it on the news, around the water cooler, when talking with friends and family, and just about everywhere you go. As the economy affects the way people are managing their purchases and investments, it also has made us more aware of what “necessity” means. I once thought a \$5 latte was a necessity at 7am, now I’ve learned how to use my \$40 coffee maker!

The news of the economy will no doubt change the way we all do business, affect the way we travel, and question the return on investment we expect from our participation. There are MPI members who will no doubt have to make a decision about their involvement in our chapter. They may ask themselves if it is worth the investment of time and money. Supervisors may inquire to the importance of their involvement. As they look at these questions, I hope they keep in mind all the reasons they are a part of this organization and the benefit they receive by being involved.

Education

Our Fall Education Day was a perfect example of how a minimal registration fee can give you a wealth of knowledge. John Foster, a very powerful, experienced attorney from within our industry, shared his tips and tools to use as we go into very important contract negotiations. Did you pick up any advice that may come in handy the next time you’re faced with an attrition charge? Maybe he gave you some advice to keep you out of the situation to begin with. As he stated “It’s cheaper to keep you out of trouble than it is to get you out of trouble.”

Networking

Although our education topics are full of information, we also learn a great deal from each other. At MPI networking events, I hear lots of advice and recommendations shared amongst members. As a supplier, I know first-hand the value of networking with clients and potential clients at MPI events. I love it when I hear planners use the phrase “Buy MPI”!

Career Enhancement

Whether you are looking to obtain your CMP or CMM certification, looking to advance in the industry, or just looking for another job opportunity, MPI is a great place to enhance your career. Our chapter job board web postings are a great way to keep up to speed on career opportunities. Looking for an international opportunity? International’s job board has dozens of possibilities. The opportunities that arise with our industry are amazing.

Industry News & Trends

MPI is a great resource to keeping you in the loop on trends in the industry. Information on green initiatives, airline changes, new hotels, new avenues to get the word out about your company, and changes that affect the way we do business is essential to keep us both competitive and moving forward. Have you considered joining the MPI LinkedIn group? What a great way to share resources and advice.

The economy is going to affect everyone at some point. Look at the positives in your life, look to your peers for advice, and by all means, stay connected and in the know. Together, as an MPI family, we will get through this tough time. ●

Mae

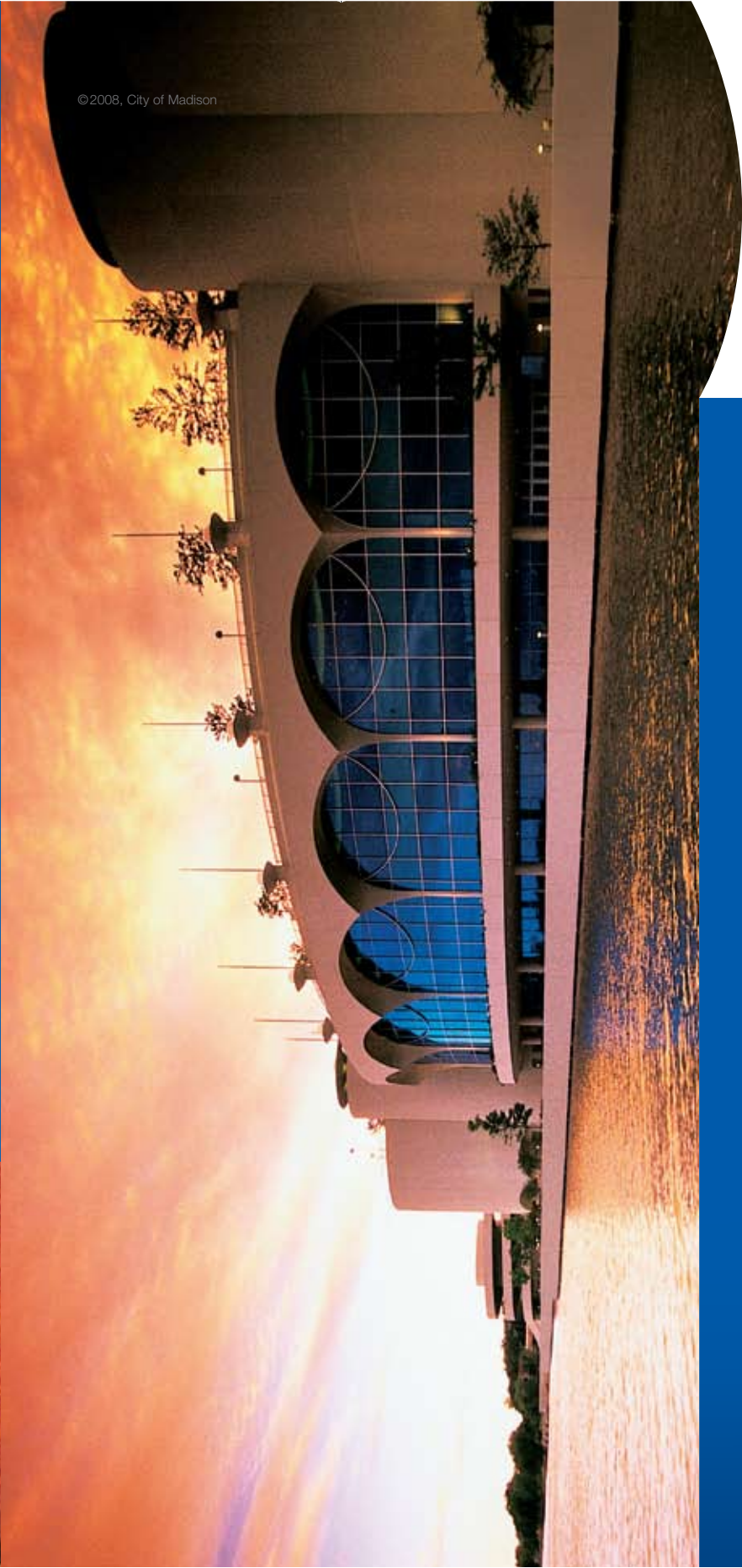


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MEET AND PLAY IN WISCONSIN

Fall Symposium & Meeting Industry Expo Highlights



As a brand new MPI member, I wasn't sure what to expect when I signed up for my first education day. I was excited and a little nervous. What if the sessions didn't apply to me? After all, I usually plan international meetings and my domestic meetings don't typically take place in Wisconsin.

Soon after arriving and reading my meeting program, I realized that there was nothing to worry about. The organizers did an excellent job of picking speakers and topics that were relevant to all types of planners and suppliers.

The day started with a general session on "What's Hot in Hotel Contracts." The keynote speaker, John S. Foster, III, Esq., CHME, explained how important it is to review your hotel contracts carefully. Before your contracts are signed there is room for negotiation with the hotel; after, you can only beg for the changes you need! Mr. Foster also provided us with insight into hotel profit margins, how to protect your client against attrition, cancellation vs. termination and force majeure.

During the lunch and tradeshow our minds were given a break and we enjoyed a variety of different lunch buffets. We also had the chance to talk with over 30 local suppliers, convention and visitors bureau representatives and hotels. To 'play' up the sports theme, the Milwaukee Brewers Sausages were in attendance as well as some of the ladies from the Brew City Bruisers – Milwaukee's Roller Derby League.

After lunch, we were given the option of attending breakout sessions with John Foster, Janet Sperstad, CMP or John DiFrances. Ms. Sperstad spoke on "Training Techniques that Get

Results" and Mr. DiFrances on "Shockingly Excellent Customer Service" and "Strategies for Must Win Negotiation." Mr. Foster answered more legal questions about contracts for both planners and suppliers.

Thanks very much to the Wyndham Milwaukee Airport Hotel for providing such a great space and wonderful food for the meeting. The day was a huge success for all involved. With 132 members in attendance, the MPI-Wisconsin Chapter set a new record. There were 64 planners, 6 students and 62 suppliers.

Lastly, the Community Outreach Team, led by Dottie the Dot, distributed information about becoming an organ donor: how you can become an organ donor, and how you can earn your family's support for your decision. A handful of attendees signed their license and put the orange dot on the front of the license to make it official. Others took the information to consider, as becoming an organ donor is a personal decision that takes some considerable thought. Some attendees, who are donors already, showed support by putting an orange dot sticker up on a poster board. MPI-Wisconsin members are a generous, socially conscious bunch, and that was proven again. Thank you for your support MPI-Wisconsin. ●



Katie Vande Zande is the Programs & Meetings Manager for the World Allergy Organization and the Collegium Internationale Allergologicum at Executive Director, Inc. in Milwaukee, WI.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

| By Sue Zimmerman

Cranberry Country Lodge in Tomah, WI, hosted the October 16, 2008, MPI-Wisconsin Chapter Educational Meeting, where the Chapter's Community Outreach Committee discovered a perfect fundraising opportunity to assist in efforts to enhance an EcoTourism project in the area.

The Necedah National Wildlife Refuge has formed a partnership with Cranberry Country Lodge and the Tomah Convention & Visitors Bureau to help promote the refuge, which is maintained by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and ensures the overall vigor within 44,000-acres. This ecosystem is home

to many rare species and boasts one of the world's largest populations of endangered Karner Blue butterflies. The refuge is also the reintroduction site for an experimental population of Whooping Cranes. The Necedah Wildlife Refuge; fire displays; artist in residence displays; a model of a crane effigy mound; dried plants displays; and animal mounts. The Wildlife Refuge will be responsible for the care/maintenance and rotation of the exhibits, mounts and informational material. The displays will be rotated on a quarterly basis.



▲ Sue Zimmerman



▲ Vicki Jacobs, Linda Hale, and Scott Dettman visit with each other at lunch during the October meeting.

to many rare species and boasts one of the world's largest populations of endangered Karner Blue butterflies. The refuge is also the reintroduction site for an experimental population of Whooping Cranes.

The Cranberry Country Lodge has designated a room in the Lodge to be used as a multipurpose room that will contain educational and informational displays chosen and created by the staff of the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge. The room has been named "The Refuge Room" and will contain a Whooping Crane display; a crane migration route display; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service displays; historical displays from the Nece-



▲ October speaker, Roger Dalkin, compare bowling shoe sizes and styles with Amanda Bauer.

Continued on page 9

Community Outreach

Continued from page 8

The MPI-Wisconsin Chapter is the first to “Buy a Brick” for the program named “Walkway to the Refuge” Capital Campaign for the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge. This program entitles the MPI-Wisconsin Chapter to inscribe a brick that will become part of the NNWR Visitor Center Entrance and Patio area overlooking the marsh at the NNWR’s new Visitor Center (project opening Fall 2010) in Necedah, Wisconsin.

A heartfelt and interesting luncheon presentation was provided by Daniel Peterson of the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge which resulted in the MPI-Wisconsin Chapter raising more than \$100.00 to purchase the 1st brick for the program. Many thanks to Marie Johnson for her very generous donation to spur the incentive!

The “Refuge Room” may be booked as a meeting or banquet room, a gathering room or a room of general interest for travelers and guests who will support the Wildlife Refuge, meeting and lodging needs and tourism in the greater Tomah area.

Cranberry Country Lodge is located at 319 Wittig Road in Tomah just off Hwy 21 near I-94, exit 143.

Questions regarding the displays in the “Refuge Room” may be directed to Daniel Peterson, Education & Outreach Coordinator, at the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge at 608-565-4412 or daniel_peterson@fws.gov. For more information on reserving the “Refuge Room” please contact the Sales Director at Cranberry Country Lodge, at 608-374-2801. ●

Sue Zimmerman is presently the Public Relations Director at Cranberry Country Lodge, where she has worked for five years in the positions of Sales Manager and Assistant General Manager. Sue is a Certified International Tour Manager (CITM) and is currently pursuing her CMP.



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STUDENT PROFILE: Timothy (Tim) A. Smith

Place of Employment: Interstate Blood and Plasma Center
Madison, WI

Job Title: Donor Processing

What drew you to the meetings industry? With the exception of my current job, I have been in the service industry ever since I have been working, in a variety of positions. Really my mother, Susan Zimmerman-MPI Member, brought it up to me while discussing college and so far it has been a great fit. To tell you the truth, I look at it as a creative challenge.

Tell us about your college program: I am currently attending MATC-Madison, and I am just getting my feet wet. I am lucky enough to have Janet Sperstad as a teacher. She keeps things pretty interesting. I am really looking forward to getting through school though, as I would like to be out in the field.

Teams or projects that you have worked on for MPI or would like to be involved with: MPI Wisconsin Chapter's special events committee would be pretty interesting. Once again, it's the whole creativity thing.

Tell us about your family: Well, I am the youngest of nine, with three brothers and five sisters. Christmas can get fairly interesting.

Where were you born? Minneapolis, Minnesota. Sorry everybody, but Go Vikings!

Where do you currently live? I am living in downtown Madison, WI

Favorite Pastimes: Probably going to Badger football games and playing disc golf.

Favorite Musical Group: Modest Mouse

Person you admire most and why: Teddy Roosevelt — "Speak softly and carry a big stick; you will go far."

Dream Vacation: To walk freely around on and inside the pyramids of both the Egyptians and the Mayans.

If I won the lottery I would: Well, after a small purchase of land in the western Wisconsin bluffs, I would invest, and probably take my family on a trip somewhere warm.

Words to live by: Prepare for the worst and the rest is easily dealt with.

Special personal accomplishments: I played the part of Jay in Neil Simon's "Lost in Yonkers" for a community theatre in Madison that won "Best Play in Madison" for 2006. It was the only show that I've done post high school and I wouldn't trade the experience that I had with that cast for the world. 🌐

Internship Postings at www.mpiwi.org.
Contact admin@mpiwi.org to post your internship position or resume today!

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know our chapter has a grant and student scholarship program? We award one \$500 grant and one \$500 scholarship annually. Grant money can be used to obtain your CMP or CMM, pay for your membership dues or attend MPI education events. The Kristin Bjurstrom Krueger Student Scholarship is available for students enrolled in a course of study in the hospitality field at an accredited college. Visit our website at www.mpiwi.org for more information.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Featuring: Chef Jason Woida

Innovation Restaurant
Crowne Plaza Milwaukee



“The Innovation menu comes from my experience and from my heart,” says Executive Chef Jason Woida, a Milwaukee native who has always felt at home in the kitchen.

In his Open Kitchen, Chef Jason cooks up a unique blend of contemporary concepts with stylish presentations made from scratch and infused with local fresh produce and meats. He takes pride in regional favorites and creative renditions that meld perfectly with the rich and luscious surroundings.

Mentored by the infamous R.C. Schroeder, CEC, Woida graduated at the top of his culinary apprenticeship, was named as the American Culinary Federation, Milwaukee Chapter, Junior Member of the Year 2003, and awarded a James Beard scholarship. He served as Executive Chef at a century-old country club, hosting some of its most affluent Lake Country members.

When not preparing culinary innovations, Chef Jason creates inventive feasts for friends and family including his toughest critics, his children. Warm summer days find him – in true Milwaukee fashion – on his Fat Boy, Harley-Davidson. ●

Tellicherry Pepper-Dusted Grilled Angus Tenderloin with a Shiraz Reduction

8 oz choice center cut Angus tenderloin
Penzeys Chicago Steak Seasoning
Penzeys Tellicherry Indian Black Peppercorn (whole)

- Using a coffee grinder or mortar and pestle, rough grind the peppercorns.
- Dust the top and bottom of steak with peppercorns and steak seasoning.
- Preheat grill on high heat.
- Spray steak with non-stick spray and place on grill.
- Grill steak for 3 minutes then turn ¼ to get criss-cross marks.
- Grill 3 more minutes.
- Turn steak over and repeat process.
- Internal temperature for medium rare should be 140 degrees.

Finish with Shiraz Reduction

1 750ml bottle Shiraz wine
2 qt. veal demi
1 Tbl. granulated garlic
1 Tbl. white pepper
1 Tbl. onion powder
¼ cup lemon juice
¼ cup Worcestershire
1 qt. water (hot)
¼ cup beef base
2/3 cup roux

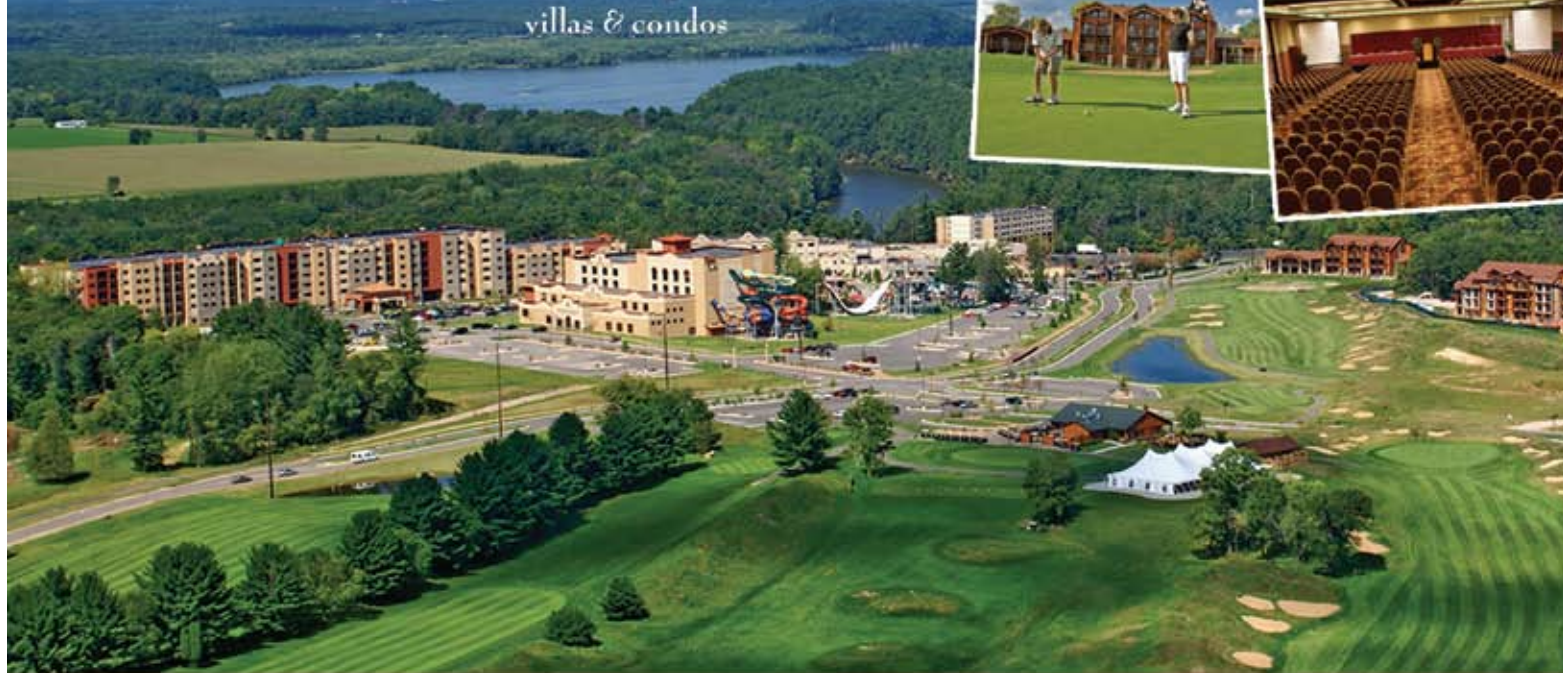
- Bring wine to a boil and reduce for 10 minutes.
- Add veal demi and all other ingredients except roux.
- Whip together and bring to boil.
- Add roux and whip until thickened.
- Simmer for 10 minutes.



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SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS: CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Tipping Point

About twelve months ago, give or take a couple of months, something strange and curiously wonderful happened. I think you probably noticed. It was a tipping point, and out of the bucket splashed an idea whose time has come; that of corporate social responsibility.

Renaissance

It is not a new idea: corporate social responsibility has been in practice for several decades among leading-edge organizations. Some have even built the foundation of their business on it, such as Timberland, or The Body Shop. Malcolm Gladwell, author

of *The Tipping Point*, would say that it has started to behave like an epidemic. It has simply reached a point where so many organizations and the people behind them have come to the powerful realization that we are all in it together.

Triple Bottom Line

Ban Ki-Moon is the Secretary-General of the United Nations. He says, “we need business to give a practical meaning and reach to the values and principles that connect cultures and people everywhere.” That is the essence of the value proposition of CSR; organizations realize that they are intrinsically linked to the long-term sustainability of the communities they do business in. In university, I was taught that all organizations must act in the best interests of the shareholders, and that their sole interest was profit. That idea of the faceless corporation is being erased with the concept that shareholders profit from sustainable business, not just short-term profits. And hence, the “triple-bottom line” was born: people, planet and profit.

People

Businesses benefit from having a highly educated and motivated work force. Indeed, in many of today’s econ-

omies, a ‘war for talent’ is envisioned, dictated by simple demographics; a larger workforce is being replaced by a much smaller, younger cohort (which, incidentally, is much more environmentally and socially aware). This means fewer people to replace the retiring current workforce. Businesses also influence the people in the communities they operate in and do business with, making social outreach a pillar of the triple bottom line. It is not all

philanthropic: helping people build sustainable communities creates sustainable marketplaces for business.

Planet

Environmental sustainability is what most people think of when they think of CSR.

Especially in this industry, it is often associated with “green meetings.” Environmentally sustainable organizations, as I prefer to think of them, seek to reduce their ecological and carbon footprints through the management of resources such as energy, non-renewable items and other waste products.

An ecological footprint is the area of land and water it would take to produce the resources needed to sustain the activity. A carbon footprint is a measure of the impact the events have in terms of the release of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas. Greenhouse gases encompass only about 0.03% of the air we breathe, yet without them we would have an inhospitable atmosphere like the moon’s. The tiny percentage of these gases in our atmosphere makes it easy to increase that percent through human activities, which is – perceptively – making our planet increasingly warm.

Profit

All organizations need to be profitable to survive. This is why profit is the third leg of the triple bottom line. An organization that is not sustainable is of no benefit



Elizabeth Henderson, CMM, CMP, M.E. Des., is the Director of Corporate Social Responsibility for MPI. She can be reached at ehenderson@mpiweb.org.

Continued on page 16

NEW MEMBERS

Please help us welcome our new members!

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NEW STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

These are interesting times that we are in. Recently we as a country participated in a historic presidential election. The thought of terrorism is still a scary reality and the economy is in a very steep slump. All of these factors have an affect on business shared by meeting planners and suppliers. This article is not intended to depress the reader. In fact its purpose is quite the opposite. The goal is to inform meeting planners and suppliers of new strategies that can assist each in the business partnership we share.

Companies are cutting back in all areas. The number of meetings is predicted to drop slightly however the number of attendees will see an even greater decrease. Budgets provided for meetings are seeing an extreme decrease from where they were a year ago. New strategies need to be developed to maintain an affected working order.

Knowledge is the key. Meeting planners need to know exactly what the client's meeting needs are. As a standard, meeting planners take the time to find all the details of the meeting in advance of searching for a location suitable to host the meeting. This is more necessary today than any other time. The more information that the meeting planner has in the beginning of the search, the easier it is for them to determine the best location.

At the same time, suppliers need to know the limits of their product. A supplier must know if the meeting is a good fit for the location before wasting the time of everyone involved. If everyone has a clear picture of what is needed the meeting will run smoother.

Additional information available to the meeting planners from suppliers could be beneficial in decision making as well. Suppliers who would like to see more business should take the time to update their websites with current photographs and floor plans. A website with the most pertinent information that can be shared will be a great tool for meeting planners to utilize. The easier it is for a planner to make a decision, the faster the contract can be signed. Suppliers need to adjust the booking process to cater to the meeting planner's needs. This will in turn develop strong relationships. Meeting planners will want to continue working with a supplier who knows his or her location, and can provide correct

information in a high-speed manner. The meeting planner will be happy because the meeting was a breeze to book and the supplier will be happy because the meeting planner will want to return with a new contracts.

The mind set of meeting attendees is changing. Several meeting attendees are taking advantage of traveling opportunities to combine the family vacation with a work appointment. Families are traveling with meeting attendees to new locations and are looking for social activities to pass the time. Once meeting attendees arrive at a location, they will not want to travel further than one tank of gas for any amenities. Meeting planners can take advantage of local parks, museums, and other attractions to entice meeting attendees to attend and stay for the full length of the meeting.

Suppliers need to be prepared of new competition. Meeting planners are looking into different locations and holding new expectations for the same meetings as a year ago. A supplier that may not have had an opportunity to compete in the past due to the lack of meeting space may now be a perfect fit for a creative meeting planner. Suppliers need to be prepared to work twice as hard as they did in the past to compete with up and coming suppliers in the shrinking market share.

The world of meeting planning is changing with the turn of the economy. To make it these days, meeting planners and suppliers need to work harder and smarter for the same business as a year ago. Future directors of sales and meeting planning VP's will be born from this environment. Both sides need to be more creative to please the meeting attendee. Knowledge of the meeting needs and supplier's locations are more important than ever. The sales process needs to be customer centric for the ease of meeting planner to book the business. If meeting planners and suppliers both follow these steps they can increase the amount of business for all parties involved. ●



Giulia Mueller is the Group Sales Manager at the Clock Tower Resort in Rockford, IL, Home of CoCo Key Water Resort.

to any of its stakeholders; not its shareholders (or members), and not the communities in which it operates. Therefore, profit is a necessary support to the ideas of people and planet in the corporate social responsibility pantheon.

Sustainability

True sustainability in our industry will recognize that all of these pieces fit together. In June, I happened to stay at a small hotel in Florence, Italy, that has a pilot project called Life Beyond Tourism (www.lifebeyondtourism.com) that I was impressed with, due to the high level of integration between key factors. They realize that true sustainability involves environment, culture, the built environment, knowledge and learning, and the economy. They are calling it the “rebirth” of destination travel, and I think this pilot project could have some things to share with us as we move forward. Other destinations, such as Denmark and Norway, have also instituted sustainability strategies.

Theory in Action

About sixteen months ago, MPI took steps to begin incorporating the principles of CSR into your community. We want to inspire, inform and activate our community, measure our progress and celebrate our success. The first step was to sign the UN Global Compact, a voluntary initiative headed by the United Nations, and designed to provide a framework for organizations committed to aligning their operations and strategies to ten principles of business in four areas: labour, anti-corruption, human rights and the environment. It involves all sectors, including government, corporations, and not-for-profit organizations such as MPI. The commitment includes reporting on our progress to the international community.

We have begun to measure the impact of our own meetings, and have posted the case studies produced from our 2007 World Education Congress in Montreal, MeetDifferent in Houston, the European Meetings and Events Conference 2008 (London) and the 2008 World Education Congress (Las Vegas) on our website for our community to learn from. Our European Meetings and Events Conference, held in London, United Kingdom, in April 2008, was the first event to become Phase 1, 2 and 3 certified under the new British Standard for sustainable events, BS 8901. This standard, developed for use at the London 2012 Olympic Games, is the first sustainable event standard in the world, and will be trying to attain ISO (International Standard) status in the future.

Education is a key part of inspiring, informing, and activating our community. We offer CSR education sessions at our con-

ferences and produced a series of webinars, free for members, in September/October 2008. Members can access the archived presentations, free, in the Virtual Knowledge Centre accessible at www.mpiweb.org/sustainability.

MPI has an eye to the future needs of our community, too. The MPI CSR task force has identified the measurement areas our community should focus on, to make them strategic assets to their organizations and to their clients. We will endeavour to develop a tool that our community can use to measure their event footprints in the areas of carbon, waste, water and energy. We will also be recommending a “best-fit” strategy for community involvement and the activation of social responsibility in our global communities.

As a direct commitment to activating corporate social responsibility, MPI added a new staff position; the MPI Director of Corporate Social Responsibility began on July 1, 2008.

Activate

Meetings and events create ecological and carbon footprints, depending on variables such as the number of people attending, where they have travelled from, energy used, destination selected, facility, and waste produced. Some of this can be mitigated by policies. We look for four things:

- How do we reduce our consumption and the resulting waste it generates? This is the most important element, and involves re-imagining how we do things. As Mark Twain said: “You cannot depend on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus.”
- Can we mitigate our impact through measures such as recycling, donating left-over food, or buying carbon offsets?
- How do we measure and report our progress? This allows us to know where we are and gives us a benchmark to improve.
- What are the potential benefits this might generate for our organization, such as cost savings, stakeholder trust, or enhanced corporate image?

Generally speaking, there are two broad areas meeting and event planners can use to create an environmentally sustainable meeting:

1. Those areas under your direct management control, like contracts, site selection, menus, suppliers and technology
2. Those areas where you can influence behavior, such as through education of stakeholders

WHO'S IN THE NEWS

Changes & Accomplishments

"Everyone has inside of him a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!"

—Anne Frank

Congratulations to **Kevin Shanley**, who is now the new General Manager for Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites, West Madison!

Two companies have made the top 25 list in the recent Corporate Meetings and Incentives! Congratulations to **Fox Premier Meetings and Incentives** in Oshkosh, and **Creative Group Inc.** in Appleton.

North Central Group in Madison opened a brand new **Hampton Inn & Suites**, along with a **Homewood Suites**, both on the west side. **Carmen Smalley** also let me know they've just broken ground on a new **Fairfield Inn** on the east side, bringing a grand total of 9 limited-service hotels for group business in Madison!

Paulette Heney, CMM, received the 2008 National Speakers Association – Wisconsin Chapter's Meeting Planner of the Year Award, which was presented at the November Education Day. Congratulations Paulette!



Sue Lidstrom is a contributing writer for the **Agenda** focusing on her 'Who's in the News' column. Please submit accomplishments and changes in employment to Sue at suelidstrom@marcushotels.com.



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WALK A MILE IN YOUR CUSTOMER'S BOWLING SHOES

After a fantastic lunch, provided by Sue Zimmerman and her staff at Cranberry Country Lodge in Tomah, Wisconsin; and after an insightful presentation by Daniel Peterson from the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge (see page 8), I was intrigued to hear Roger Dalkin explain to me and my fellow attendees how bowling is a metaphor for the business world. Through humor and real examples, Mr. Dalkin did not disappoint.

Mr. Dalkin took us through the entire bowling experience, which most of us have enjoyed one or more times in our leisure lives. With the popularity of bowling and with the enjoyment that most people have experienced from a day of bowling with family, friends and/or colleagues, what a clever way to relate to best business practices and sound business advice. From walking a mile in your customers' "bowling shoes" to avoiding entrapment in "unethical gutters," much of the sound and practical business advice I've learned in my career as a meeting planner was reiterated.

Additionally, after reviewing each bowling principle as it relates to business, Mr. Dalkin had each attendee fill out their business skills score card. After re-acclimating myself how to add up a bowling (or in this case business) score, I found that while I am practicing good business, there is always room for improvement. However, it is impractical to expect to reach perfection in your professional life, just as it is impractical to expect a perfect score of 300 in a game of bowling.

I related Mr. Dalkin's business advice back to my current position...

One of my chief responsibilities at the Snow & Ice Management Association (SIMA) is to plan and manage an annual convention with 1200 attendees and 80 exhibitors. In a less pronounced but very important role, I have the opportunity to attend trade shows across the US and Canada, as an exhibitor, to promote SIMA as a resource for snow and ice management contractors and companies, and to promote the professionalism and integrity of the industry. My main goal at these trade shows is to talk to as many folks as I can, and discuss



their interest in becoming members or taking advantage of the educational resources that SIMA offers. I do not want this goal to be inhibited by disorganization due to a lack of communication from trade show organizers or myself; unanswered questions about the trade show schedule, attendee demographics, location of the exhibitor lounge; etc., etc., etc. Through my own experience as an exhibitor, I've learned:

- To keep me a happy exhibitor is to keep me a caffeinated exhibitor; therefore, SIMA sets up a free coffee station in the exhibitor lounge during set up and trade show days. (We've included water for those who would rather be hydrated than caffeinated.)
- If I had a great show this year, I want to secure my spot in next year's show as soon as possible; therefore, SIMA makes the next year's floor plan, pricing and contracts available at this year's show.
- I want to connect primarily with decision makers; therefore, SIMA asks all Board members to walk the show floor to thank exhibitors for being a part of the show.
- I can never see too much attendee traffic on the show floor; therefore, SIMA began to offer a free lunch on the trade show floor on the last day of the show. (In the past, one could shoot a dart through the exhibit hall and not hit a single attendee—I, of course, do not encourage this practice.)

Without having "walked a mile in my exhibitors' bowling shoes," many of the strategies that SIMA uses to keep exhibitors happy and engaged may not have been developed. Whether you are in a sales, management or planner position, ask yourself, "What positive effects can happen in my organization if I walk a mile in my customers' 'bowling shoes'?"



Jennifer Hallett is the Director of Education & Certification, and chief meeting planner, for the Snow & Ice Management Association in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She can be reached at jennifer@sima.org.

LESSONS LEARNED...

Murphy's Law states, "If anything can go wrong it will." This old adage is a broad reference to potential misfortune in any of life's circumstances, but in meeting planning the outcome can be disastrous.

In pondering this old saying, I believe it concludes that every precaution be taken to prevent a meeting planning mishap. In other words, have a back-up plan or "Plan B". Is this realistic? I don't know about other planners, but most of the time my plate is full just planning the event, let alone devising a "Plan B."

What I have found beneficial is a realistic mindset that event plans can and will go awry. Another time-tested adage comes to mind about "... flying by the seat of one's pants" which refers to determining a course of action without a pre-determined plan or thinking on your feet. Now, that sounds realistic and is something to which every planner can relate to and learn from.

My experience as a planner has provided me with many teachable moments. For example, there was the time inclement weather prevented a speaker from arriving the night before his lecture. In the morning I found out he was scheduled on the first flight out of O'Hare, but would not arrive in Green Bay on time for the start of his lecture. I delayed the course start time from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. and arranged to have a buffet table set up outside the meeting room at noon, providing the delegates with a working lunch and allowing the course to end at the scheduled time. Lesson learned? Yes... remember to breathe and, in the future, advise speakers to avoid traveling through Chicago O'Hare if at all possible!

Another O'Hare experience involved a speaker who had his morning flight cancelled and couldn't get to Green Bay until about the time his lecture would be ending. Luckily, I had a committee member who knew people in high places and was able to get a replacement speaker who kept 350 registrants happy. Lesson learned? Yes... remember to breathe, re-write speakers' agreements stipulating arrival time not be less than 12 hours before course start time and continue to surround myself with good volunteers!

The importance of good volunteers and vendors can't be stressed enough. Recently, I had to locate 30 pig mandibles for a speaker teaching a hands-on oral surgery course. I tracked the jaws down months in advance and the speaker arrived on time. But, on the day of the course the mandibles were nowhere to be found.

This time it took great effort to remember to breathe, but with the aid of cell phones, great volunteers and a butcher who aspired to be Mario Andretti, the pig jaws were in place without the delegates knowing their hands-on course nearly became a lecture!

Murphy's Law was a possibility in all three cases and flying by the seat of one's pants saved the day every time. Meeting planning lesson learned: Every mistake has a split second where it can be taken back or remedied, but it calls for thinking on your feet.

Oh, and did you know that pigs don't have lips? 🐷

~~~~~  
**Susan John** is the  
Speaker & Local  
Events Coordinator  
for the Wisconsin  
Dental Association in  
Milwaukee.  
~~~~~





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CHAPTER MEETING & FUNDRAISER

The Winter Dance Party

When: February 19th

Where: Crowne Plaza Hotel, Milwaukee-Wauwatosa

Come join us February 19th for the annual Chapter Meeting & Fundraiser commemorating "The Winter Dance Party." We guarantee a good time for all! Come join the fun with carnival games like Bean Bag Toss, Can Smash, Ball Toss, Target Shoot, Pluck-A-Duck, Basketball Pop A Shot, Raceway Reef or have a team competition with the Cow Milking Contest. Win prizes, raffle tickets and enjoy popcorn and cotton candy that all culminates with the front end of a 57 Chevy and a DJ spinning all of The Winter Dance Party Hits. This is a fundraising event to support our chapter so come prepared to dance, play and win prizes and spend, spend, spend! The money raised by this event is used to support quality educational opportunities for members.



***Kat Hughes is a
Senior Event Planner
for Encore Event Plan-
ning, Oshkosh, WI.***

In January of 1959, Buddy Holly, Dion and the Belmonts, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper set out on a twenty-four day tour of the Midwestern United States. Making the closely booked appearances by bus, this tour was torture for the performers. Several degrees below zero and a bus with no heat caused many of the performers severe frostbite. But the show must go on! This infamous tour is known as The Winter Dance Party and 2009 commemorates the 50th Anniversary. If you remember the lyrics to "The Day the Music Died" then you know that after a show at the Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake, Iowa on February 2, 1959, Buddy Holly chartered a Beechcraft Bonanza to take he and his new back up band to the next stop in Moorhead, Minnesota. Carl Bunch missed the flight due to frostbite. The Big Bopper asked for his seat on the plane as he was just getting over the flu. Ritchie Valens got the last seat as he and a member of the back up band flipped a \$.50 piece for it. The plane took off in light snow and gusty winds at 12:55 AM but crashed a few minutes into the flight. Truly the day the music died.

Request for donations: The team is seeking sponsors for carnival games and entertainment. All sponsors will include signage as well as recognition in the event program. Donations are also being sought for carnival prizes, raffle items and welcome bags. Please contact Cynthia McPhedran at 414-931-3540 or e-mail at mcphedran.cynthia@millercors.com.

SUPPLIER PROFILE: Frank D'Amato

Place of Employment: Destination Kohler and the American Club in Kohler, WI

Job Title: Sales Manager

How long in the meetings industry? 7 Years

How long in MPI? 1st Year

Tell a bit about your company and/or current position:

Escape to where village charm meets old-world elegance. The American Club once provided housing, meals and recreational facilities for immigrant employees who could not afford housing. Today, The American Club is the Midwest's only AAA Five Diamond Resort Hotel providing unique, luxurious décor that creates a singular experience room by room.

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Teams or projects that you have worked on for MPI or would like to be involved with: I look forward to being actively involved in the Membership and Registration committees and offer assistance with other committees as needed.

Tell us about your family: My parents are native Sicilians and I have an extended family in Sicily that I visit every few years. I have a sister that is 25 and a math teacher for a suburban school in the Milwaukee area.

Where were you born? Milwaukee, WI

Where do you currently live? Brookfield, WI

Favorite Pastimes: I am a seasoned world traveler and love to experience new places and new things. I love music and enjoy attending all sorts of concerts and music festivals in my free time.

Favorite Musical Group: The Roots

Dream Vacation: My dream vacation would be to go on a Safari in Africa and encounter nature in its rawest of forms.


Person you admire most and why: Sounds cheesy, but my Mom. She believes strongly in giving people a chance to be the best that they can be and that everyone has what it takes to succeed. You just have to be passionate and work for it.

If I won the lottery I would: Become a philanthropist and help my country and world in the various struggles we have yet to conquer.

Words to live by: Be passionate in all that you do.

Special personal accomplishments: Customer Service Award from Marriott International in 1996. Backpacking and Climbing the mountains in Glacier National Park in Montana.

What else would you like other MPI members to know about you? I am a passionate person who does whatever I can to be a resource for my clients. 🌐



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PLANNER PROFILE: Robin Pitts



Place of Employment: Lutheran Social Services of WI & Upper MI, Inc. (LSS)

Job Title: Executive Support Manager

How long in the meetings industry? New – 2 years

How long in MPI? 2 months – I joined in September 2008

Where were you born? Milwaukee, WI

Where do you currently live? Milwaukee, WI

Tell us about your company and/or position: LSS is a non-profit agency that offers a range of community based and residential services throughout Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. Our lines of services include adoption and foster care, addictions/corrections, behavioral health counseling, children youth and family, older adults, shelter/housing, persons with disabilities and urban ministries.

I am responsible for administration of the president's office, directly supporting the president/CEO and the executive vice president/COO, overseeing the support needs of the agency-wide office, as well as the board of directors and agency-wide leadership groups. In addition, I support and serve as a member of the Senior Management Team. I also plan several meetings and events including a large annual leadership assembly for almost 300 staff. Prior to joining the administrative office, I was the Intake Unit Supervisor of the LSS foster care program in Milwaukee. I started with the agency in 2001. For more information about our agency, visit our website at www.lsswis.org.

Teams or projects that you have worked on for MPI or would like to be involved with: As a new comer to MPI, I have not worked on teams or projects but I hope to become involved and contribute to future projects!

Tell us about your family: I am the oldest daughter of 7 and have 3 wonderful children of my own (Te'Vaun 13, Lauren 5 and Layla 2) who keep me on my toes and also always planning something.

Favorite Pastimes: I really enjoy cooking, reading and trying to interpret laws! I also love to entertain, travel, go to plays and concerts and spend time with friends and loved ones.

Favorite Musical Group: One of my favorite musical groups is Kindred, a soulful married couple with great vocals, live band and positive messages.

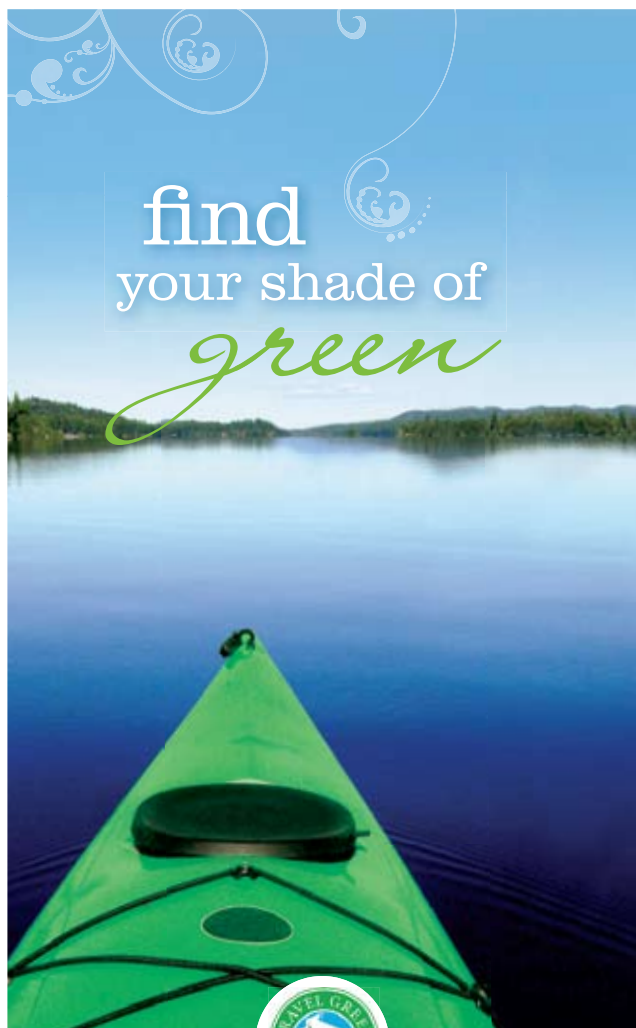
Person you admire most and why: I must say that I admire my great grandmother Amy who passed away a couple of years ago at 98 years old. She was the true essence of a very strong and independent woman who loved God and her family more than anything. As the matriarch in our family, she instilled very deep values in her children, grand and great grand children and wanted us all to love God, treat others kindly and to take very good care of children and ourselves. One thing that I admired about her was the fact that at 98, she still had and maintained her own large vegetable garden and beautiful roses outside her home.

Dream Vacation: I would love to visit Italy, Switzerland and Africa with my family.

If I won the lottery I would: Pay for and finish school achieving my lifetime goal of practicing law. I would also start a non-profit organization and Foundation supporting children's education and their wellbeing. I would donate to programs of LSS and other agencies that are near and dear to my heart to help them continue in their great mission! I would make sure that my family members could live comfortably, pay off debt and take my children around the world to learn about other cultures and enrich our lives just to name a few things.

Words to live by: "Be the change you want to see in the world." - Mahatma Gandhi

What else would you like other MPI members to know about you? I really look forward to networking and gaining new skills and information as well as hopefully being a help or resource to others! 🌟



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SHARE THE “GOOD NEWS” OF MPI

Even if you aren't a Country Music fan and know the lyrics of Alan Jackson's song; you still can relate to his message:

*“But, too much of a good thing
Is a good thing
Feelings like this can't be wrong
And, too much of a good thing
Is a good thing
And we've got a good thing going on”*
Alan Jackson

The Wisconsin Chapter of MPI has a “good thing going on” as evidenced by our steady membership statistics. If you were in attendance at the September Awards Gala, you felt the energy and enthusiasm that comes from being an active member in this Chapter. So what is the issue? We are comfortable with the status quo.

“Really?” you ask, “what's wrong with being comfortable?” There is comfort knowing that when you attend a Chapter meeting you will know everyone. Or maybe you are comfortable not attending because it is easier than to take the extra time to schedule in MPI. Being in your comfort zone isn't necessarily bad; it is safe and easy. I would challenge you try something new – start talking about MPI with people who don't know not only what MPI stands for, but what it does.

Tell your boss: Today it is important that we share with those around us, especially our bosses, what is “right” with MPI. Look for value that relates to your organization's mission statement or current goals. For example, “Going Green” is a hot topic for corporations, non-profits, and it just makes good sense. Why not share your notes from the April MPI Chapter “green” meeting. It doesn't have to be a long discussion, simply show your boss the Gala program that was “green” and tell them how the majority of the dinner was locally grown. Don't forget to include information on the Community Outreach efforts of the Chapter — that's all good “news” to share.

Tell a non-member: Our days are filled with communicating with people who are not Chapter members. Let them know you are connected to the best source of information in the meeting industry. This could be including “Member of MPI WI Chapter” to your email signature line and business cards. How about forwarding the Chapter meeting notices on to others in your office? People like to feel wanted and as an MPI member you can make a difference in the way people feel. Think how good that makes you feel!!

Welcome a “stranger”: Like going to church on Sunday, we have a tendency to talk to the same people and sit in the same places at Chapter meetings. Due to the nature of our professions, the majority of us have no problem talking with others. So why not make a point of finding someone you don't know and invite them to sit with you at the next meeting. At your table, strike up a conversation about a non-MPI related subject and learn something new about them. Why not exchange your business cards with everyone at your table as it will be easier to stay connected. The goal is for us to help make someone feel comfortable attending our Chapter meetings and they will come again and again.

Recruit a new member: Okay, we know schedules are busy and days are full so you can't always attend Chapter meetings. Why not send a member of your staff to attend to gather notes and make new connections? Look into your Outlook Contacts and I bet you can name at least two or three people that would really benefit from being involved with MPI, right? Send them a note or send the recruitment team an email and we'll do the rest. Imagine the number of new people you could network with if each of us recruited just one new member this term. The power of one!

Remember “old” members: Certainly “old” is not a reflection on their age but there are many MPI members that were active and no longer are participating. Maybe their work responsibilities have increased and it is hard to attend regularly. We all face this challenge. Think about someone you haven't seen attend a meeting lately and send them a personal message inviting them to join you at the next meeting. Be open to setting up time to meet for coffee and see what is new. Don't forget about getting LinkedIn with MPI members as the MPI connection is a strong bond.

Hopefully this will inspire you to share the good news of MPI WI Chapter — it's worth talking about. If you try one of these suggestions; let us know. There is nothing better than to share a success. If you have other suggestions; let us know that, too. The goal of our Chapter is to increase value to our members and this comes from being involved in the MPI Connection. ●



Susan Kainz is VP Member Care & Director of Leadership Development for the MPI-WI Chapter and is Director of Sales and Marketing for the Delafield Hotel in Delafield.

STAYING ON TOP OF YOUR GAME

It's a scary world right now. The unemployment rate is up, companies are cutting costs to stay afloat, and everyone is taking a close look at their budgets to see where they can save some cash. At least gas prices are down (or they were in November when I wrote this).

With all the economic pressures, is it worth it to keep your MPI membership? Is it worth it to go to MPI events? The answer to both of these questions is a resounding YES. Staying active, involved and educated will, in the long run, help you stay on top of your game. Here are some things to think about:

1. This crisis/downturn will not last forever. If you are fairly new to the industry, just ask some of the veterans what it was like in the late 1980s-early 1990s and after September 11, 2001. We experienced downturns in the economy then, and came out of it better on the other side. While this time may be more severe than those, we could pull out of it faster.
2. Now is the time to prove your worth. For planners, that means showing the cost savings and avoidance that are the direct result of your negotiating and experience. Companies are still having meetings – make sure you are showing the bang they are getting for their buck. For suppliers, now is the time to show your clients the great values you can offer through special rates, services and products. Now is not the time to hide your light – make sure your boss and clients know exactly how your expertise has positively affected the bottom line.
3. Network, network, network. Through your involvement with MPI, you have a powerful network at your disposal. By supporting each other we are supporting ourselves. Your network is available as a sounding board, resource for new opportunities, and support if things are really going bad. Fellow MPI members can be your lifeline.
4. If you are currently unemployed, MPI has an Unemployed Member Assistance program, which will allow you to keep your membership for up to 6 months after your current membership expires. For more information, please visit the MPI website (mpiweb.org).

We have always been good at pulling together, helping each other out and emerging from difficult times as better, wiser professionals. Stay positive, stay supportive and stay with MPI! ●

Sustainability Matters
Continued from page 16

These combine to create a broader impact in the community and on business sustainability.

Measurement

If you want to begin to measure your activities, here are some ideas:

- Weight of recycled goods, including: paper, glass, aluminum
- Amount/weight of food composted
- Amount/number of meals sent to food recovery organizations
- Amount/weight of paper saved through provision of services in alternate ways (i.e. on-line conference programs, etc.)
- Total mileage traveled by attendees, staff, presenters; your "Event Miles"
- Carbon emissions through travel
- Total energy usage
- Community service hours

As we continue to inspire, inform and activate our community, as we measure and celebrate our success, we want to engage you in our journey. Become a member of our CSR Groupspace community at <http://www.mpiweb.org/cms/mpiweb/community/CommHome.aspx?commid=97> (anyone can join). Sustainability matters. Join our journey. ●



Susan Arts,
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Vice President
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for the MPI-WI
Chapter.

DID YOU KNOW THAT THE MPI WISCONSIN CHAPTER UTILIZES A PROGRAM CALLED RIDESHARE.US?

Ride-sharing is the promotion of carpooling to reduce dependence on oil and greenhouse gas emissions. Rideshare.us, a program available in both the US and Canada, utilizes an interactive database application that facilitates the development of a ridesharing or carpooling network over the Internet. The focus of Rideshare.us's outreach is to encourage organizations, schools, businesses and individuals to utilize the program, which allows for the creation of an almost instant online rideshare or carpool solution. The service is used at no charge both by event organizers and attendees.

The benefits are numerous:

- Save money
- Reduce environmental impact
- Reduce dependence on oil
- Reduce road congestion
- Save parking lot space
- Get to know new people*

Getting to know new people is one of the things that MPI members like to do best! In my first experience with Rideshare.us, through the MPI-Wisconsin Chapter, I clicked through from a meeting announcement to Rideshare.us to look for someone to ride with to a meeting that was almost three hours away. I didn't find any takers and didn't want to be the first one to post something. I know that is a silly reason, but I am sure I am not the only one who rationalized this way. Through email, I did end up riding to the meeting with two MPI-Wisconsin Chapter members, whom I had the pleasure of getting to know much better in our nearly six hours on the road.



However, Rideshare.us could have made the process a little quicker and easier.

Saving money on the cost of fuel is important to your meeting attendees. Currently, there are approximately 115 events posted to Rideshare.us. Joshua Kielas, Rideshare.us Webmaster, said that utilization of the website tends to coincide with gas prices. The higher the prices at the pump, the more people turn

to Rideshare.us to help reduce fuel costs. Mr. Kielas said that in order for Rideshare.us to be a more viable option, "... the paradigm that convenience is paramount and public or alternative transportation is somehow second rate really needs to shift." As meeting professionals, we are in a position to be able to promote the public and alternative transportation as an option for our attendees.

While helping our attendees save money and facilitating a chance for them to meet new people, reducing greenhouse gas emissions is also an area where meeting professionals can truly have an impact. In doing our part to make the world a greener place, Rideshare.us can be a viable option for us to set up carpool for meetings and events. I manage an international meeting each year, and I intend to try out rideshare.us. With a relatively small time commitment, and no cost, it is well-worth it to check it out for your next meeting or event. ●

**Source: www.rideshare.us*



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Datebook: CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2009

JANUARY 2009

8-9

Education / Board Retreat
Hilton Garden Inn-Middleton
Madison, WI
www.mpiwi.org

10

CMP Exam

FEBRUARY 2009

7-10

MPI Meet Different
Georgia World Congress Center
Atlanta, GA

19

MPI-WI Chapter Education/Fundraiser
Crowne Plaza Milwaukee
www.mpiwi.org

MARCH 2009

1-3

The European Meetings and Events Conference
Torina, Italy

19

MPI-WI Chapter Education
Holiday Inn Neenah Riverwalk
www.mpiwi.org

APRIL 2009

23

MPI-WI Chapter Education
Four Seasons Resort
Pembine

MAY 2009

13-14

Volunteer Kickoff/Education Day
Sheraton Madison
Madison

JUNE 2009

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MPI-WI & WSAE Golf Outing
Grand Geneva Resort & Spa
Lake Geneva



Connecting you to the
global meeting + event community

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