

# MPI-WISCONSIN CHAPTER Agenda

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# MPI-WISCONSIN CHAPTER Agenda

MARCH/APRIL 2022

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# Editor's Note



## Putting the “You” in Ed-YOU-cation

Happy (almost) spring MPI-Wisconsin! I don't know about you, but I am ready for warmer weather, longer days, the smell of grass, and the momentum spring brings.

One of my favorite times of the MPI year is spring, when our annual Education Day event occurs. My first position on the Board was handling Special Education Projects that include the Spring Education Day, so I always enjoy seeing what the teams present. This year's planning team has put together all the best components: a location we haven't been to lately, our annual pre-education Trivia Night, a great speaker line-up, and a fantastic theme: “Ed-YOU-cation.” It's a perfect combination of fun, networking, and learning. Be sure to read the articles in this issue for more information about the event and register early!

There's more Ed-YOU-cation available as the year 2022 gets rolling. In addition to our chapter events, I want to share some other events with you as registration, hosted buyer opportunities and/or scholarships are open NOW.

### IMEX Frankfurt

**May 31 – June 2, 2022, Frankfurt, Germany**

For those members who plan international events, I highly recommend attending IMEX Frankfurt, where you'll be able to meet with more global partners than at IMEX America. In addition, there are opportunities to combine a trip to IMEX Frankfurt with Familiarization trips (FAM's), so you can experience destinations you might not usually get to visit and spend more quality time with vendor partners. For example, in 2019, I was hosted by Associated Luxury Hotels International (ALHI) and joined their group trip to Budapest before IMEX Frankfurt. Not only did I get to experience a wonderful city, but I also strengthened my professional relationship with my ALHI contacts and forged new relationships with fellow meeting professionals. At IMEX in Frankfurt, I was impressed at the more extensive show floor and how many different vendors were in Frankfurt that I didn't see at IMEX America. If you don't know if you have the right connections to get hosted through one of the exhibiting intermediaries, you can also apply directly to IMEX for the Hosted Buyer program!

*Continued on page 6*





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# TRIVIA GOLD

## You Are GOLDen

*By Jody Roos*

Join us on April 6th for the MPI-WI Chapter's Annual Trivia Night! Since this is MPI's GOLDen anniversary year, this year's theme is "YOU ARE GOLDEN." The fun will begin at 6:00 pm at the beautiful, newly renovated La Crosse Center. Gather your team of four or create your own team that night! Teams and individuals are encouraged to have some fun choosing your team's name and theme...maybe add a little GOLD to it! To add more excitement to this fabulous evening, we will have an amazing silent auction happening throughout the GOLDen evening. We have many wonderfully supportive MPI members and non-members that have donated amazing items to help the chapter raise some funds.

Mark your calendar, book your hotel room, come join us and show off your GOLDen smarts with your teammates. Let's make Trivia Night 2022 an unforgettable night of GOLDen fun and excitement that will be talked about for many GOLDen years to come!!!

See you then and remember –

## YOU ARE GOLDEN!

*Continued from page 4*

### PCMA EduCon

**June 5 – 8, 2022, New Orleans, LA**

While our chapter is on education hiatus for the summer, fill your brain down in New Orleans. PCMA's EduCon is a multi-day education event with opportunities to learn from both the speakers and other attendees. One of the best breakout sessions I remember attending was years ago: a case study at PCMA EduCon in San Antonio. A professional meeting planner talked us through her conference, with her vendor partners chiming in as they reviewed all aspects of the event. I took copious amounts of notes in that session, which is a sure sign of valuable content. EduCon usually gives you an excellent opportunity to experience the locale, and this is a perfect time to enjoy New Orleans!

### MPI's WEC

**June 21 – 23, 2022, San Francisco, CA**

MPI's WEC cannot be missed! Head to San Francisco this year to help MPI celebrate our 50th anniversary. If you've never been to WEC, it's an excellent opportunity to gain professional education, network with fellow MPI members from our chapter and around the globe, and experience room sets, presentation formats, and F&B options firsthand. In addition, WEC has a newly branded hosted buyer opportunity for Planners called the Business Exchange Program that's very worthwhile if you do business within the US. Additionally, MPI Foundation's scholarships for WEC are open from March 15 - April 8. I was happy to be awarded a scholarship to attend WEC last year. All I needed to provide in return was a video thanking the Foundation for my scholarship and a virtual interview post-conference to share my experience. This was totally worth it to experience one of the best conferences in our industry.

Put the "YOU" in Ed-YOU-cation! Start with our Spring Education event in April and keep it going throughout 2022!





# President's Message



**SHANNON TIMMERMAN, CMP**

2021-2022 President, MPI-WI Chapter

**A**s I come down from the reinvigorating high from our Wisconsin Chapter Board of Directors Mid-Year Retreat, I am filled with excitement for my few remaining months as your Chapter President! We had a fantastic retreat, and I think I speak for the rest of the board when I say that it was much needed!

We had a chance to reflect on our successes and shortcomings of our first half of the year and put plans into motion for the remainder of this 2021-2022 board year. I was thrilled to see that our successes outweighed our missteps! We also had a chance to reconnect on a more personal level as a Board, which really brought us together, and I believe will make us stronger. I could not be more proud with the time and effort that every board member put into this retreat. As MPI Global says, "When we meet, we change the world." Living proof, right here! If we learned anything over the past couple of years, virtual board meetings do not have the same outcomes, or the same way of connecting with one another.

We put a focus on our volunteer opportunities and tasked each other with making personal connections to each of our chapter members. It was great to meet new members at the February meeting, saying "Hey, you called me last week!" Our volunteers are the backbone to making our chapter what it is. We depend on volunteers for selling raffle tickets, writing articles, joining education teams, speaker teams, membership teams, and eventually becoming board members. Any place you look, there is an opportunity to volunteer. Had I not jumped on an education team at my very first event, and then spent my first year on the raffle team, I would probably not be writing this article today. Best first step I ever made!

We have already started this year with a couple of pretty amazing speakers. Michal Rust engaged our group in the Wisconsin Dells with over thirty minutes of Q&A, which I don't think I have ever seen before! And in February, Lisa Koenecke kept us engaged and laughing, up until the very last minute. I have heard so much positive feedback from members about these two speakers, which is amazing. Kudos to our

awesome speaker team, and our education teams for their hard work on these two successful events.

For anyone that may have missed these first two, I highly encourage you to try and make it to the April Ed-YOU-cation Day, kicking off with Trivia Night at the La Crosse Center on April 6 & 7. Not only will we continue to celebrate the 50 Year Anniversary of MPI, but we will also be celebrating Global Meetings Industry Day (GMID) on April 7th. Our speaker line up is outstanding, so this is definitely not one to miss! This event will be followed up with our chapter welcoming Bonnie Carlson, member of the MPI IBOD, to Green Bay on May 12th. Hope to see you there!

Our attendance numbers in 2022 are increasing, and as our registration roster grows, my hope for the future brightens. The buzz and laughter I take in during every networking break, lunch, and reception is heartwarming! I almost hate to break it up to get everyone back to their seats. I'll say it again..."When we meet, we change the world!" Won't you join us?

*Shannon*



# Join us for Ed-YOU-cation Day in La Crosse

By Maria Peot, CMP

Following the exciting You Are Golden Trivia Night, MPI-WI brings you fantastic education on Thursday. The education portion of the event will feature a full day of in-person education with speakers on event design, negotiation, leadership, and tools for a positive outlook to tackle the decade ahead. The day is guaranteed to be full of vision and inspiration.

Thanks to the support of our chapter's Strategic Partners, member planner registration will be complimentary for the education portion of the event.

Visit the [Spring Education Day page](#) on the MPI-WI website to learn more and register today! ▶



April 6-7, 2022  
La Crosse Center, La Crosse, WI

## SPEAKER LINEUP



**LISA WALDEN**

**Keynote**

*Bury the Hustle: Striving for Balance in a Burnout World*

**Breakout**

*Connecting Across Generations*



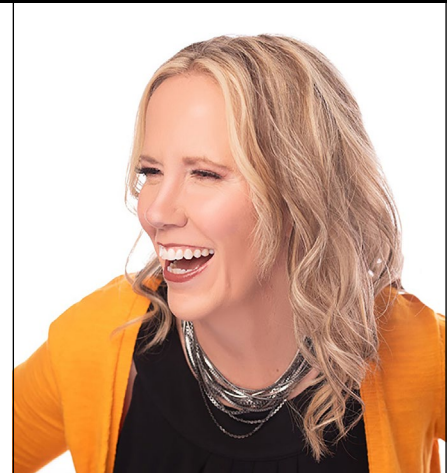
**ALAN KLEINFELD**

**Keynote**

*On the Road Again: Safety for Travelers*

**Breakout**

*Crisis Communication*



**SHAWNA SUCKOW**

**Keynote**

*The Roaring Twenties - Marketing & Selling Better in the Post-Pandemic Decade*

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# EVENT SAFETY: All About the Individual

By Alan Kleinfeld

The safety and security of our events continues to be a challenging topic for many planners. While several venues and suppliers continue to make a few strides, most planners are dumbstruck by the question: how do I make my events safer?

## SAFETY FIRST

One of the more basic items to conquer is personal safety. A one-page sheet of relevant info to blast out is all you need to help prepare your attendees for things they might encounter while at your meeting.

Such a list makes even more sense when you hear stories, like I have, of a stranger attempting entry into an occupied hotel room or of a woman opening her

hotel room for the first time to discover an unknown man hiding behind the curtains. That's just plain unsettling. The following guidelines are helpful in developing your own safety sheet.

### AT THE HOTEL OR VENUE

- As you are checking in, casually ask, "has the room been inspected by housekeeping?" to confirm the room is empty.
- Carry two room keys, in separate pockets/compartments, in case one quits working.
- Each time you approach your room, have your room key in hand.
- Look in the closet, see if there's a safe, umbrella, flashlight or other useful items.
- Study the telephone and learn how the hotel deals with emergencies.

*Continued on page 10*

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- Look at the back of the room door to see fire procedures.
- Don't open the door for anyone you don't know or aren't expecting. Call the front desk to confirm hotel employees.

#### ABOUT TOWN

- Know the address of your hotel or venue and which public safety department responds in case of an emergency.
- Include the non-emergency number for said department.
- Know the location of the nearest hospital.
- Keep hands free while walking, in case you need to defend yourself (or catch yourself if you trip).
- Ask the CVB or the venue contact or go online to find out about other events in town and at the hotel. Things like sporting events, construction projects, and other group gatherings could impact the attendee experience or their safety.
- Share info about public transportation, cab services and ride share programs.

#### GENERAL SAFETY REMINDERS

- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer (and take other steps to reduce illness).
- Take off name badge when not at the meeting (and require them during the meeting).
- Be aware of your surroundings, especially outside of the venue.
- Away from the meeting, walk or travel with a friend, colleague or co-worker.
- Provide maps to show nearby dining and shopping (concierge desks can be a valuable source of information in this regard).
- Be aware of and prepare for local weather trends during your stay.
- Leave a copy of your itinerary at home or with the office.

If you're like many others in the meetings industry, who have not been traveling lately, then you and your attendees will be glad to have these reminders as you begin to take flight. ▲

---

*Alan Kleinfeld, MTA, CMM, CMP, LEO, has over 25 years experience in meeting management combined with over 15 years in public safety, much of it done simultaneously. He's a seasoned consultant, speaker, writer and educator. His safety topics have included site selection, safety overview, emergency operations and event safety. Contact him at [alan@arrivemanagement.com](mailto:alan@arrivemanagement.com).*

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**The \$500 Kristin Bjurstrom Krueger Student Scholarship** is available for students enrolled in a course of study in the meetings field at an accredited college. Visit <https://www.mpi.org/chapters/wisconsin/get-involved/kbk-student-scholarship> for more information and the application process.

**Applications for both the Member Grant and Kristin Bjurstrom Krueger Student Scholarship are due by April 30.**





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Elkhart Lake, WI





# January Education Event Recap

By Kortnee Carroll & Elizabeth Poh



**O**n January 20th we hosted our January Education Event at The Wilderness Resort in the Wisconsin Dells. Our MPI-Wisconsin Chapter President and the Director of Sales for the Wilderness,

Shannon Timmerman, welcomed our group to her beautiful property. Jessica Rieflin and Leah Hauck-Mills from the Wisconsin Dells Visitor & Convention Bureau welcomed our group to the area as well, and played a fun Dells trivia game! Did you know that Ishnala Supper Club served 93,738 Old Fashioned in 2021?! Lunch was a delicious bruschetta chicken with sides of red potatoes and green beans. The dessert table was heaven on earth for anyone with a sweet tooth!

After lunch we moved over to the meeting room where Shannon welcomed everyone again and went over updates



for MPI. This year is MPI's 50th Anniversary, so please share a picture or a video of yourself online here with why you joined, why you're still a member, or your favorite MPI memory. Shannon thanked all of our 2022 sponsors, who came out in full force for us this year. We had an overwhelming number of sponsors, which is amazing!

Michael Rust gave us an amazing presentation on "Finding the Key to Consensus." Michael is the CEO of the Winnebago Conflict Resolution Center, has performed more than a thousand mediations, and spoken to thousands throughout his career. He started off by showing half of the room an image as the other half looked away, and then again to the opposite side. After comparing what the different groups saw, Michael then asked us "So, who is right?" His point was that perception matters and in order to find a consensus, you have to understand both perceptions. Your point of view will change what you see and the truth does not matter, what matters is what you're willing to agree on, and, can you find a resolution?



Michael Rust

## Michael also went over his way of how to Stop Conflict C.O.L.D.

**C** - What is the **cost of continuing** the conflict? Is it money, relationships, or time?

**O** - What are the **objectives and options** with the conflict? What do you need, what do they need, what are your objectives, and what are their objectives? Most importantly, what are the options for meeting those objectives?

**L** - **Listen and learn** with laser focus. You need to remove distractions, be open minded, take a breath, and ask open ended questions.

**D** - **Decide to deal**. You need to compare options to the cost, be hard on the problem and soft on the person, and know that emotions are necessary for some.





With talking about emotions, Michael explained to us that it is impossible for signals to get to our rational part of our brain without going through the part of the brain that holds our emotions. You will not engage emotionally if we do not want to, so it is important to breathe and pay attention to our emotions.



Lastly, Michael talked to us about doing unto others as THEY WANT to be done unto. There are many different people in the world and we respond best to how we are. It is important to remember to not respond how WE would like to be responded to, but rather the other person. Robin Williams

was the type of person who loved to be goofy and tell jokes, so the best way to communicate with him was not to be too data driven. Bill Gates on the other hand, loves data and that is how he communicates, so the best way to communicate something to him would be with data. Everyone is different so you need to listen and find out what is the best way to communicate with others.





The last thing Michael taught us was to ask ourselves three questions in the moment:

- What is actually happening?
- What am I making it mean?
- What else could it mean?

Thank you again to Michael Rust for giving us a great presentation at our January meeting!

After the meeting we headed over to the reception where the Dells VCB and The Wilderness Resort hosted us with amazing appetizers and cocktails. Shannon set up a behind the scenes tour of their property's Take Flight, as well as an opportunity to experience the ride! If you have not yet been to their resort and done the Take Flight, we highly recommend it! ▴





# Battle Workplace Burnout with Boundaries

By Lisa X. Walden of Good Company Consulting

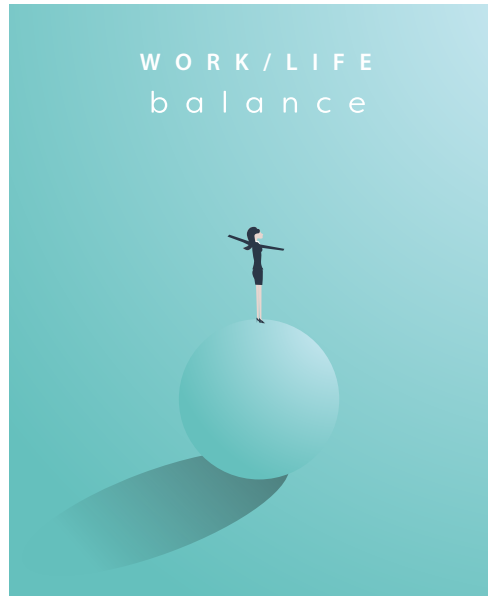
## **“WORK-LIFE BALANCE” MIGHT SOUND LIKE A UNICORN —**

a fantastical idea that belongs in a fairytale more than in our current workplace climate. And if it was unattainable before the pandemic years, these days it seems like a truly mythical and unrealistic dream.

Instead, what we've got now is work-life enmeshment. If you're working from home, your living room is your office. Your couch is your new, very non-ergonomic desk chair. Working hours can now be defined as waking hours, because... what's the difference? And even for those who've returned to the office, the work creep, and expectation to “always be reachable” (even when you're not there) is oh so real.

A big reason behind these unrealistic expectations is not just where we work, but how we've long thought about work. The rise-and-grind hustle culture mentality that has been so prevalent is simply unsustainable. On top of that, phones and laptops have made it all too easy to take our work back home with us, seeping into family time, morning routines, and our ability to take real and true breaks. Think checking email right after peeling your eyes open in the morning. Think dialing into “one quick meeting” while on vacation. Think sending work texts during dinner. Right now, there's an urgent need to address this style of working. After the emotionally and physically draining past couple of years, most of the workforce is feeling exhausted. Though there's no question that the work still needs to get done, the threat of burnout looms large.

So how do gain control over your workflow, and add back a bit of calm (and even enjoyment) back into your life? One very important word: boundaries. Without a doubt, boundary setting is key to building a work life that looks less like enmeshment, and more like work-life harmony.



## **To get started...**

- Be extremely intentional about setting your own boundaries
- Create a “start of workday” and “end of workday” ritual. Light some incense, make coffee, go for a walk, change into your “professional athleisure.” Whatever it looks like for you, create an intentional portal from “home mode” to “work mode” and back again.
- Make a list of negotiables and non-negotiables. As meeting planners, things will inevitably come up and there will be times you just have to be available. But try to draw some boundaries by defining what's negotiable (ex: Netflix watching or cleaning time) and what's absolutely not (ex: reading to kids before bedtime or your daily walk). Writing down an actual list of what these are will help you better stick to the plan.

## **Don't be shy... advocate for those boundaries!**

Communicate when you feel overwhelmed. Oftentimes colleagues and leaders aren't even aware that you're at that point. If you tell them you're feeling stressed, anxious, or near burnout, more often than not they'll do what they can to help.

Make it a practice to regularly let people know when you are and aren't available. This could look like sending a short email that reads, “Lisa's availability” which includes the hours you can easily be reached that week, and when you're off the grid. It might feel a bit uncomfortable, but it will make people think twice before trying to reach you when you're technically not working. ▴





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## AAA Four Diamond 'Inspected Clean' enhancement status

Meeting planners have many choices when deciding where to host an event in Wisconsin. That's why The Osthoff Resort is incredibly honored to have been awarded the 2022 Best Lakeshore Resort from *Wisconsin Meeting's Magazine* in their 2022 Reader's Choice Awards.

The Osthoff Resort offers everything you need to keep business going, or make it pause for a while. The pristine waters of Elkhart Lake provide an abundance of watercraft recreation — from pontoon boats, kayaking and paddleboard adventures to simply soaking in the breathtaking sunsets and live entertainment on the lakefront.

The award streak doesn't stop there; The Osthoff Resort also received the new and coveted AAA

Four Diamond "Inspected Clean" status for outstanding cleanliness standards throughout the property.

This new sanitation process for AAA properties is recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and is currently used in healthcare, food service, education and other settings requiring effective sanitation-monitoring programs.

"The Osthoff Resort is honored to have been granted both the 'Best Lakeshore Resort' award as well as the AAA Four Diamond 'Inspected Clean' enhancement status," stated Tracie Toth, CMP, Sales Director of The Osthoff Resort. "These awards are a true testament to our resort's already high standards for property cleanliness and surface sanitation. "Now, more than ever, our staff

is committed to exceeding guest expectations and providing superior Midwest travel experiences."

Travelers and meeting-goers are in the greatest of hands when it comes to working with the tenured and experienced Sales and Catering team of The Osthoff Resort, totaling 90 years of Osthoff event experience. The resort is also proud to have two active MPI members with a combined 50-years of membership and two Certified Meeting Professionals on staff. ▲







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# February Education Recap

By: Kortnee Carroll

**WE ENJOYED OUR FEBRUARY EDUCATION MEETING** at the Doubletree by Hilton, Madison East on February 10th, and it was great! We were greeted as we walked in by our speaker, Lisa Koenecke, as she was handing out hugs... Hershey Kiss Hugs!

As an experienced and energetic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) professional speaker and facilitator, Lisa specializes in counteracting unconscious bias and LGBTQ+ inclusion in business. Her impact is amplified through strengthening each person's allyship. With a demonstrated history of working in secondary education and a passion toward community and social services, she is an expert in counseling, crisis intervention, educational leadership, and program development.

Lisa Koenecke



After receiving her Diversity & Inclusion certification from Cornell University, Lisa launched her Inclusion Ally business. Being an expert in LGBTQ+ issues has allowed her to present to all 50 states and keynote numerous school counseling conferences. We were lucky to have her at our meeting to talk about how we can show, shift, & shape to have successful events.

Lisa started off by asking what inclusion is, and to which she told us that "diversity is being invited to the party;







inclusion is being asked to dance.” – Verna Myers. How are you showing that your events are inclusive? Are you thinking about everyone when you’re planning? Some ways to do this is to make sure that you are showing on your event page how you’re ADA compliant, have inclusive registration forms, provide interpreters, welcome service/support animals, and many more!

a theater where the cheaper seats are located, a group of people who criticize someone, often by focusing on insignificant details.” Most people at the meeting did not know that saying “peanut gallery” is offensive, and that is okay! This is about learning and shifting our thinking and actions to be an inclusive person and hosting inclusive events.

We as an MPI team did the “privilege walk” and it was very eye opening. Lisa had us take a step forward if we finished high school, if our main language is English, and if our parents went to college. She had us take a step back if we have ever struggled to get food, if someone in our family only has an elementary education...and many more questions. At the end we were all in different spots in the room. Some of us were more towards the middle of the room, some of us didn’t move much at all, and some of us were back against the wall. She showed us



Now that you know how to show it, you need to shift. Shifts can be uncomfortable for some, just like with a generation used to have a landline phone and then ten years later they have to shift into using a smart phone. You can do small things such as offering a “let me type” option on your event registration page, rather than limiting individuals to selecting Mr., Mrs., Miss., etc. You can shift your language so that you’re not offensive to others. Did you know that saying “peanut gallery” is offensive to some? The definition is “The top gallery in



*Continued on page 20*

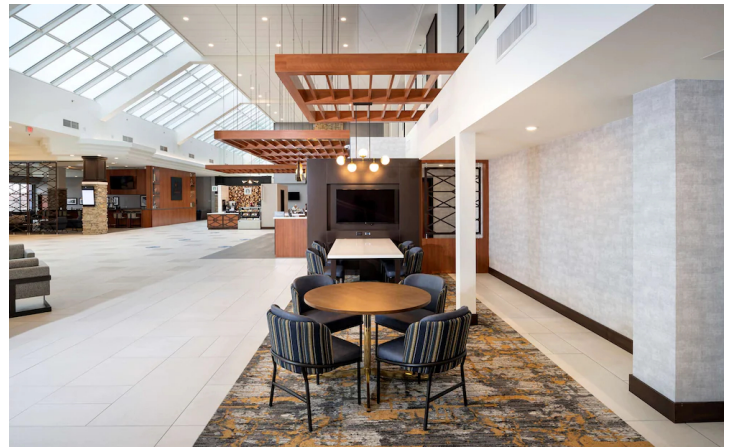




Continued from page 19

that every single person that you meet is not the same. Some have had a lot more privilege than others, and we need to think as planners about how can we make sure that we are being inclusive of everyone.

If you missed Lisa's amazing talk, you can buy her book on Amazon! The book is "Be an Inclusion Ally" and it is even available for your Kindle. ▴



Back to table of contents







# Check Out the WEC Business Exchange Program!

*By: Beth Schnabel, CMP, CED, CUDE*

Working on a limited budget but still interested in attending WEC? Be sure to look into the Business Exchange (formerly known as the Hosted Buyer) program through the MPI Exchange. Qualifying planners can receive reimbursement to cover some or most of the expenses to attend WEC and it's a great way to meet suppliers while attending exclusive experiences designed for planner participants.

Participating in this program allows you to add professional development opportunities without wiping out your entire budget, while also sourcing multiple locations over just a couple of days during the one-on-one supplier meetings. You can get an entire calendar year of events sourced in just two days!

Learn more about the program and [apply here](#) by April 1, 2022.



# FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

## Doubletree Signature Cookie Recipe

### Ingredients:

1½ pound butter, softened (2 sticks)  
¾ cup + 1 tablespoon granulated sugar  
¾ cup packed light brown sugar  
2 large eggs  
1 ¼ teaspoons vanilla extract  
¼ teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice  
2 ¼ cups flour  
1/2 cup rolled oats  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon salt  
Pinch cinnamon  
2 2/3 cups Nestle Tollhouse semi-sweet chocolate chips  
1 3/4 cups chopped walnuts



### Directions:

- Preheat oven to 300°F. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.
- Cream butter and sugars in the bowl of a stand mixer on medium speed for about 2 minutes.
- Add eggs, vanilla, and lemon juice, blending with mixer on low speed for 30 seconds, then medium speed for about 2 minutes, or until light and fluffy, scraping down bowl.
- With mixer on low speed, add flour, oats, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon, blending for about 45 seconds. Don't overmix.
- Remove bowl from mixer and stir in chocolate chips and walnuts.
- Portion dough with a scoop (about 3 tablespoons) onto parchment lined baking sheet about 2 inches apart.
- Bake for 20 to 23 minutes, or until edges are golden brown and center is still soft.
- Remove from oven and cool on baking sheet for about 1 hour.

**NOTE:** You can freeze the unbaked cookies, and there's no need to thaw. Preheat oven to 300°F and place frozen cookies on parchment paper-lined baking sheet about 2 inches apart. Bake until edges are golden brown and center is still soft.

*Makes 26 cookies*






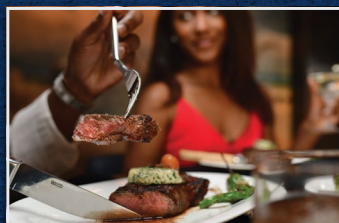


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# Volunteer Spotlight



## JUDY KELLER

Events Director  
Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association

*By Maria Peot, CMP*

### **Judy has been nominated for the Volunteer Spotlight by the entire Board of Directors!**

Judy is....

- *always* willing to volunteer
- a fantastic, consistent asset to the speaker liaison team
- extremely thorough when working with speakers
- an absolute pleasure to work with
- overall amazing!

Judy has served in many roles for the chapter including the Education team, Community Outreach team, Speaker team, and more. Thank you, Judy, for ALL you do for the Wisconsin Chapter! ▲

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Interested in being featured here?  
Consider volunteering for our amazing chapter! Contact our Vice President of Membership: Michelle Tyo Johnson at [michelle@northcoastpro.com](mailto:michelle@northcoastpro.com)  
- or contact any board member to learn what current opportunities are available within their team. Visit [our website](#) for a list of our Board Members and their roles.





# The Power of MPI

By Lindsey Hess, CMP



**MY FIRST MPI EVENT** I was invited to attend as a guest, and I had no idea what I was really going to. I remember walking into the Holiday Inn American Center and so many people came up to say “Hi,” introduced themselves, and asked where I worked. I had no idea there was a group that got together to talk about meetings. Also, getting hotels together, and they are friends? Aren’t they competing against each other for business? I went back to work the next day and told my supervisor how I wanted to become a member and join this group to learn more about meeting planning. It was approved and I looked forward to going to as many meetings as I could.

I have been a member since August 2014. Every event, I meet someone new or get to know a member just a little bit more. I was told volunteering is a great way to get to know people, and that couldn’t be more true! I’ve volunteered with Trivia Night, Gala planning, Bidding for Good, and the RFP committee. Through these committees I’ve met new people and learned from others about meeting and event planning. I know that when I am planning a meeting and have questions, I can reach out to other planners for advice. I know I won’t be judged, rather supported. I enjoy going to MPI meetings and hearing great speakers, but I mostly love going to MPI meetings for the networking. It is where I have built great relationships with other planners, CVBs, and suppliers. Knowing that when I plan a meeting, I have people I can go to who are going to do what they can to help me produce the best meeting possible.

I’ve had many members over the last few years tell me I should join the Board of Directors. My first response was...uh no, I can’t do that! Here I am a few years later, doing just that! There is no way I would have accepted this without the amazing people who push me to grow and take on something new and out of my comfort zone. They all have my back and I know they won’t let me fail!

Beyond my involvement as an MPI volunteer and making connections who can help me in my day to day job, the networking has proven to be invaluable. In December I decided it was time to start looking for a new job. I needed to find something that brought me joy and challenged me. I also knew that wherever I was going, I wanted to continue to be a part of MPI. I came across a job at Wisconsin Cheesemakers Association and applied at the end of January. I followed up with Judy Keller, who I’ve gotten to know through MPI. The following week I had an interview, and I asked if they supported me being a part of MPI. They said absolutely! A week later I was hired! This would not have happened had I not been a part of MPI and been able to get to know Judy! The networking that happens at MPI events is so important. Where would we all be if it weren’t for MPI?

It has been said many times and I will continue to say it, MPI is more than just planners and suppliers. We are family. A family that supports each other every day. I am so thankful to be apart of this family, to be able to continue to learn, grow, meet amazing people, and make lifelong friends! ▲



# Board Member Profile



## Michelle Tyo-Johnson

### VP MEMBERSHIP

Owner/President  
NorthCoast Media Group

**Tell us about the company you work for and/or your position:** A long-time employee of NorthCoast Productions and Made Ya Look, I purchased the businesses in September 2021 and formed NorthCoast Media Group.

NorthCoast Media Group a woman-owned media production company. Women currently represent less than 30% of producer/directors in the media industry.

NorthCoast Media Group provides services not only to clients in Wisconsin but across the country. Specializing in providing video, photography, copywriting, content creation, design, live event production, and other marketing elements, NorthCoast serves a wide variety of industries, including commercial and industrial fields, specifically manufacturing, health, financial, retail, food, and e-commerce.

**How long have you been in the meetings industry?** 20+ years

**Tell us a few things about your role on our Chapter Board:** As VP of Membership, I oversee the membership team. We are responsible for member recruitment and retention. Sara Beuthien and Josh Wimmer are amazing and really the heart of the membership team!

**What drew you to serve on our Chapter Board?** This is my second time around on the board. The first time was about 10 years ago. I love being involved. The MPI-WI Chapter has a special place in my heart and I love that I get to give back to our chapter as a board member.

**What do you enjoy about your board service, and what are you learning?** I love the opportunity to work and learn from people that I may not have connected with in my day-to-day life.

**What are your hobbies and interests?** When I am not working or volunteering, you will find me in my studio painting!

**Tell us about your family:** My biggest supporter, my husband, Stuart, and I have been together for 23 years. We have three adult children. Our two sons are both currently serving in the Navy. Our daughter recently got married and has also chosen a life of public service with Brown County. We have a five year old grandson and another grandchild on the way! Being grandparents is kinda the greatest thing ever!

**Favorite song/band/artist:** I love all sorts of music – from classic rock to 90's rap and everything in between.

**Person you admire and why:** I have had so many amazing role models and mentors in my life. I don't think I could choose just one! I have been very blessed!

**What is something that is still on your bucket list?** I have never been on a cruise and I would love to go on one someday!

**Tell us your words to live by or share a favorite quote:** "If you are always trying to be normal, you will never know how amazing you can be." – Maya Angelou





# MPI WISCONSIN

## ANNIVERSARIES

# CELEBRATE!

**Congratulations to those members celebrating a milestone anniversary  
in January, February, March & April!\***

### ***Congratulations!***

#### **20 YEAR**

**DENISE WALLACE**  
CM Associates/Corporate  
Travel Concepts

#### **10 YEAR**

**LORI JOHNSON**  
Janesville Area Convention &  
Visitors Bureau

#### **5 YEAR**

**JANA LIPARI**  
Forte Research Systems

#### **15 YEAR**

**NANCY HALL**  
PNC

**AMY QUALMANN, CMP**  
Wisconsin Association of  
School Boards

**BETH SCHNABEL, CMP, CED, CUDE**  
Filene Research Institute

**JODY SIMON**  
Wisconsin Association of Mutual Insurance  
Companies

**REBECCA STAATS**  
Resident Inn and Fairfield  
By Marriott Eau Claire

**JOSH WIMMER**  
Premier Choice Association Management

**CARRIE WUNDERLICH**  
State Bar of Wisconsin

## NEW MEMBERS

# WELCOME

**Welcome to our new members!**

**NICOLE JACOBSON**  
PC/Nametag  
Supplier

**ANGELA KAIN**  
Secura  
Planner

**SARAH ROLLER GROTH**  
Mediasite/Sonic Foundry  
Supplier

*\*We apologize for the misprint in the last issue of the  
AGENDA which did not include this year's January &  
February anniversaries.*



# Planner Profile: Katie Mueller



## KATIE MUELLER

Marketing Events Specialist  
Advarra

**Tell us about your company and/or position:** Advarra advances the way clinical research is conducted: bringing life sciences companies, CROs, research sites, investigators, and academia together at the intersection of safety, technology, and collaboration. With trusted review solutions, innovative technologies, experienced consultants, and deep-seated connections across the industry, Advarra provides integrated solutions that safeguard trial participants, empower clinical sites, ensure compliance, and optimize research performance.

As a Marketing Events Specialist, I help plan all of our events and tradeshow.

**How long have you been in the meetings industry?** 10 years

**What do you like most about being a member of MPI?** Networking with other professionals and the educational speakers. I am looking forward to attending more events and getting to know everyone better.

## What drew you to become a planner?

I have always been a very organized person that loves to plan things in my own life - vacations, weekend plans, celebrations, etc. When I moved to Madison after college and started working in the Hospitality industry, I knew I wanted my career path to be in events.

**What was your favorite team or project you have worked on for MPI, or what area of the Chapter do you hope to become involved with?** Unfortunately, I have not had the chance to get involved in a specific area of the Chapter yet as I only recently joined MPI, but am looking forward to learning more about the different committees and how I can get involved with one that interests me.

**Tell us about your family:** I am married to my college sweetheart, Brad. We have two beautiful girls – Lucy (6) and Eloise (4) - and the sweetest dog, Bear (13). I am from Stillwater, MN and moved to Madison after college. I fell in love with the city and have been here ever since.

## What are your hobbies and interests?

I love to knit, spend time with my family, and travel. I have an Etsy shop with my cousin called TightKnitWiMn. I knit hats, embroider sweatshirts, and make custom beaded bracelets. Check us out on Instagram @Tight\_Knit\_WiMn!

**Favorite song//band/artist:** I love the Lumineers, Lizzo, Country, Rap, and all kinds of music.

**What is something that is still on your bucket list?** After college my husband (boyfriend at the time) and I backpacked around Europe for a month and a half visiting Switzerland, Ireland, France and Italy. I would love to go back for a month-long visit and explore new countries around Europe.

**Tell us the words you live by or share a favorite quote:** “Spread love everywhere you go.” – Mother Teresa





# WHO'S IN THE NEWS

Compiled by Jennifer Mell, CMP, Maria Peot, CMP & Kathy Reading

1

## LINDSEY HESS, CMP

is taking the next step in her career by joining fellow MPI-WI member **Judy Keller** at the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association as their new Program & Office Coordinator.

*The power of MPI is strong!*



2

## ALISON HUBER, CMP

was featured in [Wisconsin Meetings Magazine](#), discussing how her experience landed her in her current role, and how she's finding success in her (not so) new position!

*Congratulations Alison on being recognized in this article!*



3

## TAMARA PUTNEY JESSWEIN, CMP, VEMM

is proud to announce the arrival of new grandbaby, Lincoln Jack Arps! Oma and Opa are in love with their seven pound, twelve ounce, twenty inch bundle of joy that arrived on February 6th!

*Enjoy all those teeny tiny baby snuggles while you can, Tamara!*



4

Congratulations to **STEVE LORENZ, CMP**, for taking on the role of CMP Governance Commission Chair for the Events Industry Council (EIC).

*Thank you for your service to the industry Steve, we know your leadership will help advance the roles of CMPs worldwide!*



5

## LAURA MACISAAC, CMP

celebrated 25 fantastic years with the Frank Lloyd Wright designed Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center in February. Those of us who host events in this facility know what a delight her and her staff are to work with!

*Congratulations on your tenure, Laura, we look forward to many more years of planning events with you at this fabulous venue!*

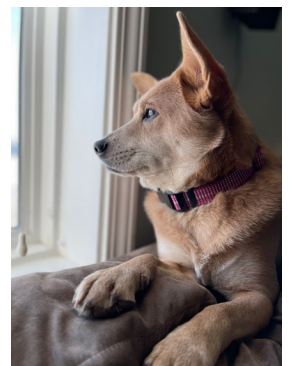


6

## BETH SCHNABEL, CMP, CED, CUDE

and her family welcomed new puppy Frankie, a three year old Shiba Inu mix, to their pack recently.

*We love this new adventure for your family, Beth!*



Continued On Page [30](#)



# WHO'S **IN THE** NEWS

Compiled by Jennifer Mell, CMP, Maria Peot, CMP & Kathy Reading

7

**AMY QUALMANN, CMP** and longtime boyfriend Brian got married in Puerto Rico the first week of February! *We couldn't be happier for you, Amy.*

*MPI-WI is sending extra love to your marriage!*



8

**JESSICA RIEFLIN**

has been promoted to Director of Sales at the Wisconsin Dells Visitor & Convention Bureau. She is very excited to lead the sales efforts for this fun and exciting destination!

*Congratulations on the well-deserved promotion, Jessica!*



9

Kudos to MPI-WI members for recognition in the annual "Best of Wisconsin Meetings" readers' polls:

- The Osthoff Resort, Elkhart Lake – Best Lakeshore Resort
- Event Essentials, Windsor – Best Supplier
- Lake Geneva Cruise Line, Lake Geneva – Best Group Outing

10

On Wednesday, Feb. 2, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers announced that \$21.9 million in grants would be awarded to 27 local governments and organizations through the Tourism Capital Investment Grant Program. These major tourism-related capital improvement projects across the state are "shovel-ready" to help promote, maintain, and bolster Wisconsin's tourism industry. [Full press release can be found here.](#)

**NOTE:** if you have any news to share in this column, please contact Maria Peot, Director - Publications & Community Outreach, [maria.peot@gmail.com](mailto:maria.peot@gmail.com).





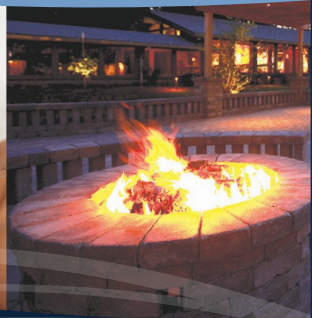
A NATURAL CHOICE YEAR-ROUND FOR WISCONSIN MEETINGS



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# Supplier Profile: Katie Ragan



## KATIE RAGAN

Senior Account Manager  
Wisconsin Center District

### **Tell us about your family:**

I have been married to my husband, Ben, for eighteen years. We have two kids, Ella (17) and Finnegan (14).

### **Where were you born?**

Milwaukee, WI

### **Where do you currently live?**

Fox Point, WI

### **What are your hobbies?**

Since I became a homeowner, my hobbies have become house-focused: painting, planting, landscaping...all while listening to true crime podcasts.

### **Favorite movie:**

The original *Willy Wonka & The Chocolate Factory* from 1971.

### **Person you admire and why:**

I admire Megan Seppmann, VP of Sales for the Wisconsin Center District. She is a supportive, purposeful, and engaged leader who always strives for excellence and truly cares about her team on a personal level.

### **Dream vacation:**

Galapagos Islands

### **If I won the lottery I would:**

Travel the world.

### **Words to live by:**

Teamwork makes the dream work!

### **How long in the meetings industry?**

Six years in events, with the last two years specific to the meetings industry.

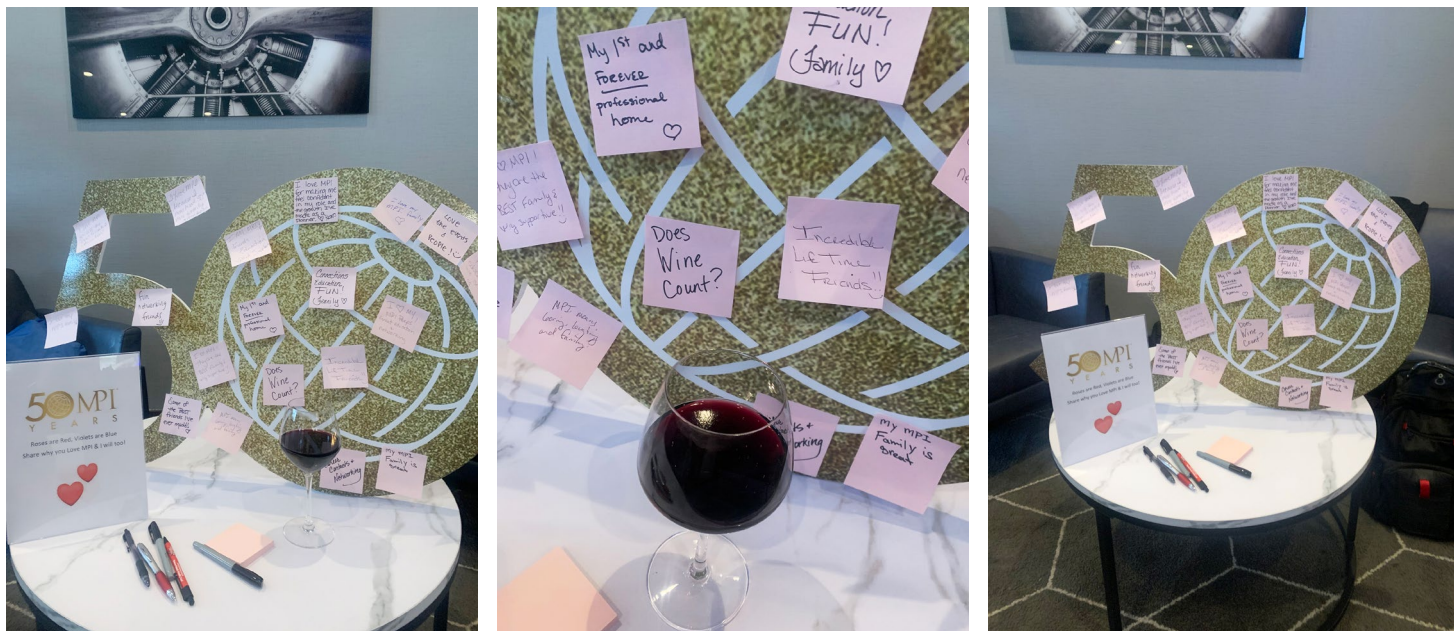
### **Tell a bit about your company and/or current position:**

The Wisconsin Center District consists of the Wisconsin Center, Miller High Life Theatre and UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena. We recently broke ground on a \$420M expansion which will nearly double our convention center space, slated to open Q1 2024!

I currently book space for all events, 18-months and in, that do not fall in the sports or entertainment category. Meetings, conferences, conventions, weddings, galas, graduations, etc. I feel lucky to be able to work with such a diverse group of clients while representing downtown Milwaukee!







*By: Maria Peot, CMP and Shannon Timmerman, CMP*

his year, Meeting Professionals International is celebrating 50 years of being the premier resource for meeting planners and suppliers. This is an incredible milestone for the organization, and we will be celebrating in various ways throughout the year...

**We are SO excited to take part in MPI's Golden Celebration this year!**

# Enhance your meeting planning career with the **MPI ACADEMY**

With hundreds of hours of free education for MPI members, the MPI Academy is your one-stop shop for meeting planning and event industry skills training, CE credits and certificate courses. Featuring online and in-person classes and webinars, it's the perfect resource for the job you have - or the job you want.

**CERTIFICATE COURSES:** <https://www.mpi.org/education>

## SAVE THE DATE

### 2022 CHAPTER EVENTS

**Time to get excited for 2022 and all of our MPI-WI Chapter events!**

2022 is in full swing! This year's in-person events are bound to be great experiences.

**APRIL 6 & 7**

**TRIVIA NIGHT & SPRING EDUCATION DAY** — La Crosse Center

**MAY 12**

**EDUCATION EVENT** — Hyatt Regency Green Bay

**AUGUST 11**

**AWARDS GALA** — Hilton Appleton Paper Valley (formerly Red Lion)

**SEPTEMBER 22**

**EDUCATION EVENT** — The Ingleside Hotel in Pewaukee

**OCTOBER 19 & 20**

**EVENING RECEPTION, PROPERTY TOURS, & MORNING EDUCATION EVENT**

— DoubleTree Brookfield

**NOVEMBER 13 – 15**

**GREAT LAKES EDUCATION SUMMIT** — Grand Geneva

