

# My Trip “Down the Shore” for MPI WEC 2016

By: Susan Piel, CMP

MPI’s annual conference, the World Education Congress (WEC) was held in Atlantic City (AKA: AC) in June of 2016. The conference started off with the Northern California Chapter having an All California/Hawaii reception on Saturday evening before the WEC Welcome Reception on the beach just off the boardwalk (AKA: the boards). The reception included delicious food samples from the top restaurants in AC, refreshing drinks and plenty of time to greet friends old and new. After the Welcome Reception we headed down the boards in Rolling Chairs (AC’s answer to pedi cabs) to Steel Pier where we road some of the rides and had a great time.



Sunday, The WaterCoolers kicked off with the Opening General Session with some great numbers about the life of a planner and how it is the 5<sup>th</sup> most stressful job in the world. The general session had some unusual seating arrangements including long tables, bistro tables, high tables, couches and lounge seating. CEO Paul Van Deventer quoted Mohammed Ali with the line “Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth” using this as a chance to thank the volunteer leaders and encourage others to become involved.

I got some great tips for helpful websites and apps in the session titled “A Day in the Life of a Nerdy Meeting Professional”. One of the best is unroll.me that lets you clean up your inbox and helps you unsubscribe from many of your email subscriptions. Another fun one is the Big Box of No, an app that gives you a bunch of different sound buttons that help you to say no when needed.



That night was the MPI Foundation’s The Big Deal where I came in 3<sup>rd</sup> at my Texas Hold ‘em table, my best finish yet!

Monday I really enjoyed my chance to attend the Behind the Stage with Freeman program during the Flash Point Idea Assembly. This gave me the chance to sit in the production area and watch and listen in on the technical team calling the show and camera crew. It was very interesting to see what all

goes on behind the scenes and the Freeman team was great at answering all of our questions. I really learned a lot.



Monday night I was treated to a make-up application before dinner and then Train performing at the MPI Foundation Rendezvous. What an incredibly fun concert!

The last day of this year's WEC included the Innovation Showcase where seven new and innovative ideas were presented and judges voted for the one that would have the biggest impact on the meetings industry. The winner was Catchable Box, a throwable microphone that looks like a stuffed cube. It allows you for real audience engagement at meetings. It was fascinating to see what ideas people are coming up with for the industry.

The WEC 2017 Preview Lunch sponsored by Las Vegas included a surprise performance by Rick Springfield!

The final evening started with an emotional LGBTQA Reception that honored the victims of the Orlando nightclub shooting and continued with the Closing Night Celebration at Harrah's Pool After Dark.

Overall, WEC 2016 was a great event with lots of terrific education, great networking and fabulous entertainment. I can't wait until WEC 2017 in Las Vegas! Time for my Exit (even though I have never lived off of one in New Jersey!)

