



Vol. XV, No. 1

1996, 1997, 2001, 2002, 2003, & 2004 Award-Winning Newsletter

1st Quarter 2007

Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter of the Society of Government Meeting Professionals

www.sgmpaustin.org

Treasure Chest of Education

by Curtis J. Thames, Jr., CMP, U.S. Department of Treasury

Our Partners in Education Conference involving the Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter, the North Texas Chapter and the Wild West Chapter was held this year at South Padre Island, Texas. Also invited and in attendance was the newly-formed Houston Gulf Coast Chapter. The conference was held at the Radisson Resort South Padre Island and sponsored by the Resort and the South Padre Island Convention and Visitors Bureau.



A SPI officer handcuffs Bob Nichols and cuts off his tie because wearing a tie is a serious violation.

The conference was very well organized and well attended. It truly was as advertised, a “Treasure Chest of Education.” Our committees did an outstanding job while our suppliers and exhibitors led the way with their support of the conference. The networking alone was worth the conference registration fee. Welcoming the Houston chapter with warmth and professionalism, as only SGMP members can, we were able to show them how to hold a top-notch educational event and still have that personal touch.

The kickoff golf tournament on Thursday was well attended and is summarized in the article below. Formal registration opened Friday with several activities to welcome the attendees.

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SGMP Members Shoot Pars, Birdies and “Others”

by Jim Deuser, McAllen CVB and Stacy Janecka, CMP, Office of the Attorney General

The ‘First Annual SGMP Cup’ sponsored by Omni Hotels of Texas was designed to get people interested in the game of golf, out onto a course for some basic instruction and a round of golf with more experienced players in a relaxed, fun atmosphere. Out of 19 golfers, we had nine beginners many of whom never held a golf club before like Courtney Arnall and Kelly Roche!

Serious golfers know that a HUGE part of the enjoyment of golf depends on who is in your foursome. Besides a game of skill, it’s also a game of relationships, friendships and camaraderie. SGMP members had

(continued on page 4)



Leadership



A Word From Our President

by Karla Starkweather, Texas Health & Human Services Commission

This year is flying by! The regional conference was a huge success. It was inspiring to see all the people who volunteered and played a part in planning the conference. There were 55 committee members listed in the program. Some people did a lot and some had a very small part; and this team produced an extraordinary conference.

In April, we will be announcing the new officers for our chapter. The new board will take office on July 1. We appreciate your continued support of our chapter leadership.

Before you know it, it will be time for the national conference in Atlantic City May 2-6. It is SGMP's 25th anniversary and this conference promises to be better than ever. Go to sgmp.org and click on the Education Conference link for registration and lodging information. Sponsorships are still available as well.

Keeping with the theme of the Crowning Touch of Educa-

tion, the chapters will compete in a "Show Us Your Shoes" competition at the opening reception. This 'Miss America' tradition began in the 1970s, when it was discovered that during the Boardwalk Parade, many of the contestants wore slippers under their gowns. For more information, visit <http://www.missamerica.org/competition-info/miss-america-parade.asp>. A representative of each chapter will be in the parade and model a shoe that is indicative of their chapter and region of the country. If you have any suggestions on how our shoe should be decorated, please let me know. Sister Sledge will be performing at the opening reception, so as you can see, the first evening of the event is going to be incredible. And it will just get better as it goes. Our chapter is entered in the Newsletter of the Year and Program of the Year competitions. Keep your fingers crossed!

The national charity this year is ARC of Atlantic County. It is a private non-profit organization that has been making a difference in the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families since its founding in 1961. Lanna Johnson will be collecting donations for the charity in March and April.

Board Buzz

by Lydia Starry, CMP, Department of Veterans Affairs

It has been a truly busy time for the Board. We have had two personnel board changes. We lost our First Vice President, Eric Brown, CMP and Director - Supplier, Lili Larson to job changes. Jim Zukowski is not the First Vice President and chairing the Communications Committee. Kathy Casarez has taken over the Director position and is in charge of the web site.

Many of our Board members were instrumental in the planning of our Regional Conference that was recently held in South Padre Island. The conference was an absolute success. From the weather to the hotel service to the conference speakers, we had extremely positive feedback on the outstanding event.

SGMP recently created the Gilmer Institute and we are extremely pleased to say that we are represented in the Institute by chapter member Grace Nied, CGMP. Grace's committee will be evaluating scholarships, honors and awards, and leadership programs. The Institute will also be providing guidance on education certifications, award criteria, standardization on the quality of chapter programs and sponsorship endowment.

As many of you know, attending a National Conference requires substantial support from your government agency, hotel property, etc. Many times we do not get the financial support to make this endeavor possible. As we have stated previously, the more involved you are as a member, the more professional benefits you reap. This year, our Board voted that all board members will be funded 100 percent to attend the National Conference. Remember, as an active committee member you are rewarded not only professionally but also financially for both the Regional and the National conferences. You may not receive 100 percent support, but you will get substantial support based on your submission. I hope to see you May 2-6 in Atlantic City.

Financial Report

November 2006—January 2007

By Jaime Yount, Doubletree Hotel Austin

Income

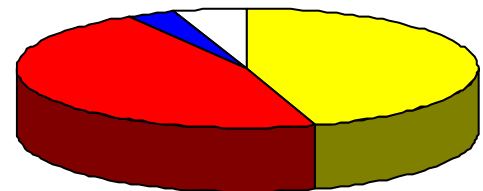
| | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Revenue Share | \$ 1,275 |
| Monthly Dues | 1,900 |
| Raffles | 1,531 |
| Newsletter Sponsorship | 525 |
| Total Income | \$ 5,231 |

Expenditures

\$ 3,881

Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter Membership-March 2007

■ Suppliers ■ Planners ■ Contract Planners □ Retired



SGMP Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter

Board Members

President

Karla Starkweather (512) 424-6927

First Vice President

Jim Zukowski (512) 475-1660

Second Vice President

Susie Ashcraft (512) 417-5052

Treasurer

Jaime Yount (512) 374-4804

Secretary

Lydia Starry, CMP (512) 326-6077

Director (Planner)

Kathy Casarez (512) 463-1463

Director (Planner)

Linda Jackson, CGMP (512) 206-3209

Director (Supplier)

Connie Ramos (512) 445-5050

Immediate Past President

Grace Nied, CGMP (512) 475-8113

Committee Chairs

Awards & Scholarships

Karla Starkweather (512) 424-6927

Education Committee

Connie Ramos (512) 445-5050

Communications Committee

Jim Zukowski—Newsletter (512) 475-1660

Kathy Casarez—Web site (512) 463-1463

Finance Committee

Jaime Yount (512) 374-4804

Fundraising Committee

Susie Ashcraft (512) 417-5052

Membership Committee

Linda Jackson, CGMP (512) 206-3209

Community Involvement Committee

Lanna Johnson, Chair (512) 206-5939

Grace Nied, CGMP, Liaison (512) 475-8113

Policy and Procedures & Bylaws

Lydia Starry, CMP (512) 326-6077

Newsletter Committee Members

Jim Zukowski, Chair Lydia Starry, CMP, Co-Chair

Dee Lurry, Editor

Many committee members who contribute articles and ideas.

Advertising Prices

Full Page Color \$250 Full Page Black & White \$200

1/2 Page Color \$150 1/2 Page Black & White \$125

1/4 Page Color \$75

Ad Insert \$300

Direct advertising inquiries to Jaime Yount (512) 374-4804. SGMP Lone Star News is a quarterly publication of the Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter of the Society of Government Meeting Professionals.

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Membership Update

By Linda Jackson, CGMP, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission

The chapter has 175 members and our ratio is 52.4% Planners and 47.6% Suppliers. We have 81 Government Planners, 6 Contract Planners, 79 Suppliers, 0 Associate Planners and nine Retired/Student members. A special thank you goes out to Bob Nichols and his committee who have been busy sending out e-mail reminders for renewals—which helps us maintain our ratio.

Welcome our newest members...

Planners

Jennifer Royster

Executive Women in Texas Government

Brenda Sanchez

Texas Department of Agriculture

Terry Burns

Texas Veterans Commission

Denise Garza

Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association

Cecilia Perkins

Texas Association Against Sexual Assault

Suppliers

Stephanie Nichols

La Quinta Management L.L.C.

Brenda Teichroeb, CHSP

The R. K. Group

Tiffany Ahadi

La Copa Inn and Suites, South Padre Island

Sharon Benavides

Drury Hotels—San Antonio

It Pays to Renew on Time!

The chapter is always looking for ways to give back to our members. Effective immediately, if you renew your membership by your renewal date, your next meeting is on us! Upon receiving notice from National, we will mail you a certificate to attend one meeting free, excluding conferences or retreats.

Members on the Move

Sindia Monarrez-Aguirre is the new contact for the DoubleTree San Antonio North, while **Tania Tadevic** has moved to the Hyatt Riverwalk, replacing Mandy Jackson. **James Bennett** has replaced Crystal Fletcher at the Amarillo CVB. **Martha de Leon** is representing the Wynham St. Anthony Hotel. **Kristi Griffith, CHSP**, has a new home, PHM Hospitality. We would also like to welcome **Diana (Dedi) Kavanaugh** who is the new contact for the Radisson Hotel & Suites Town Lake and **Cindy Peaslee** who represents the Bryan College Station CVB.

Thanks for Renewing Your Membership

Pene Bridges, Tyler CVB ★ **Kathy Casarez**, State Bar of Texas ★ **Rhonda Durst**, Texas General Land Office ★ **Fay Fauré**, Y.O. Ranch Resort Hotel ★ **Linda Fernandez**, Fernandez Group, Inc. ★ **Kathy Greene**, Retired Planner ★ **Kristi Griffith, CHSP**, PHM Hospitality ★ **Nancy Hanson**, UT PETEX ★ **Wilma Harvey**, Corpus Christi CVB ★ **Juan Hernandez**, Office of Public Insurance ★ **Heather Hidalgo, CMP**, Texas Justice Court Training Center ★ **Blair Keen**, DoubleTree Guest Suites ★ **Betty Luedecke**, Retired Planner ★ **Sindia Monarrez-Aguirre**, DoubleTree Hotel ★ **Joan Morales**, Retired Planner ★ **Grace Nied, CGMP**, Governor's Center for Management Development ★ **Sue Phillips, CMP**, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality ★ **Eugene Rios**, Texas Education Agency ★ **Robert Stanfield**, La Posada Hotel ★ **Melissa J. Schank**, Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association ★ **Karla Starkweather**, Health and Human Services Commission ★ **Ann Tyree**, Texas Department of State Health Services ★ **Jason Sechrest**, Keena and Company ★ **Michelle Williams**, Wingate Inn ★ **Jaime Yount**, DoubleTree Hotel Austin

Chapter News



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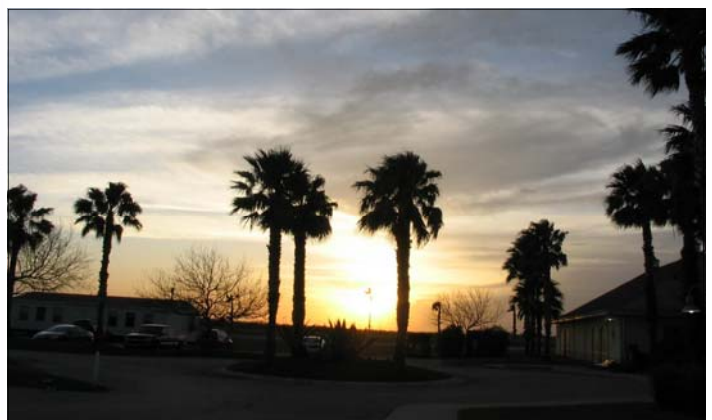
Pars, Birdies and "Others" (cont'd from page 1)

the opportunity to enjoy all of the above on the day before the regional conference began on South Padre Island. The balmy overcast day began with a basic skills clinic conducted by golf professional, Kenny Brewer. First-time golfers learned how to



hold a club, address the ball ("Hi, ball!") and hopefully, hit golf balls further than they could throw them. Players with more experience got a "refresher course" and everybody warmed up for the tournament on the driving range. Joene Grissom, of Grissom and Associates in Austin, followed up with a presentation on "Golf Fore Business," as well as basic instruction on golf etiquette.

For lunch, we all enjoyed South Texas fajitas and terrific brownies slathered with whipped cream. Unfortunately, a 40-mph wind hit just as we were starting our luncheon and blew the fiberglass cover off of the pavilion where we were meeting. Afterwards, we headed out to brave the elements on the beautiful golf course laid out along the banks of the Laguna Madre bay. Prizes were awarded for the funniest golf story, most strokes on one hole, as well as Longest Drive, Closest to the Pin and Straightest Drive. Team members, some of whom were new to SGMP, made new friends and renewed old friendships. And all of the beginner players claim to have been bitten by the Golf Bug!! Perhaps some deals were struck at the 19th hole! Each golfer received a bag full of "goodies" thanks to the Irving CVB. Special thanks again to Omni Hotels of Texas for providing the resources that made this a most memorable event.





Charter members Betty Luedecke and Stacy Janecka, CMP, celebrate the chapter's birthday.

January Meeting: Celebrating With A Parachute

by Bob Nichols, Governor's Center for Management Development

What a grand beginning for the Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter's 2007 education year! Helping celebrate the chapter's sixteenth birthday at the Holiday Inn Town Lake was Sue Cullen of Sue Cullen & Associates. Ms. Cullen presented 'The Ten Point Life/Work Balance' tune-up. Sue is an experienced and qualified Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) provider, who has also trained with Richard Bolles, author of "What Color Is Your Parachute?" As the shrouds of a parachute provide lift to the individual, Sue's 'Ten Point Life/Work Balance' provides a similar contribution. With great energy and enthusiasm she demonstrated her ten points - Appreciate, Connect, Nourish, Move, Prioritize, Let go, Restore, Grow, Laugh and Matter. Each of these used collectively will allow one to tune up their life, which will offer opportunities of exceeding all expectations. Being the best you can be allows you to better serve and support others. Through use of "The Ten Point Life/Work Balance," one will be better able to serve and support clients, colleagues, friends and family when the need arises. Our hosts, Jyll Vertuno and Connie Fisher at the Holiday Inn Town Lake were an important part of this birthday celebration. Stacy Janecka's coordination of this month's event, with Connie Ramos providing a birthday cake, rounded out an eventful and educational evening.

February Meeting: How to Survive in a Seller's Market

by Jim Zukowski, Texas Board of Dental Examiners

The February 8, 2007, Educational Meeting was held on the Flagship Texas Boat, Lake Travis, and sponsored by the Lubbock CVB and Holiday Inns-Downtown Lubbock.

Trina Butler, Helms Briscoe, came and spoke on how a government planner can survive in a seller's market on her birthday. A seller's market is defined as a market where there is an excess of demand over the supply of rooms. In today's market, it is harder to find good deals on hotel rooms. Some of the reasons why this has occurred can be attributed to the 9/11 aftermath, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, fewer new property constructions and the trend of many hotels being converted to condominiums and apartments. Trina suggested we should use the resources available to us. These include: CVB's—they can do a lot of leg work for us; Hotel relationships—they assist us in gaining trust and support; National & Regional Sales—these individuals can provide us more options and resources on a broader scale; and/or Site selection companies—which can group functions together for more concessions.

An important point during the presentation was for government meeting planners to show their value to the hotel by bringing a history of the event to the negotiating table. Finally, Ms. Butler emphasized the need for government meeting planners to be flexible, be informed and know how to compromise. Our thanks to the Lubbock CVB and Holiday Inns-Downtown Lubbock for this innovative venue.



Bob Nichols with speaker Trina Butler.

March Meeting: TxDOT Update

by Curtis J. Thames, Jr., CMP, U.S. Department of Treasury

Coming off a very successful Joint Conference at South Padre Island, it was back to business as usual for our chapter. We held our March 2007 meeting at the beautiful Hyatt Regency Austin hotel. Our meeting was held in the spacious Foothills II meeting room, which has a breathtaking view of Town Lake and the Congress Street Bridge. Our host, Ms. Gay Dotin, was very gracious and the meeting menu was tremendous. Our meetings here are always well attended and this one was no exception. Attendees were treated to a slide show of photographs taken at the conference. Thanks to Barbara Fryer of AVW-TELAV for providing the screen and projector and thanks to Jaime Yount for bringing the photos. Our educational topic was a Texas Department of Transportation update by Mr. Steve Tstelnik. He gave us plenty of information concerning Austin/Central Texas highway issues and also eloquently covered the concerns of our audience and fielded numerous questions. The Austin area is going through some major highway changes and having a representative speak to us was very informative for our meeting professionals.

We finished the evening with our past president, Ms. Grace Nied, CGMP, introducing our candidates for our board positions. The candidates were limited in time but gave the members something to think about to help us with our future decisions while voting. Our chapter is very important to us and our board is the brains and the backbone of how we are represented locally and nationally. All candidates spoke to keeping the chapter moving forward and continuing to grow. Good luck to all our candidates. When the email ballot comes in, please take a few minutes out of your busy schedules and vote.

Chapter News

Launch into 2007 with the Community Involvement Committee

by Lanna Johnson, Department of State Health Services

The Community Involvement Committee's activities for first quarter 2007 included a January 21 workday at the Capital Area Food Bank, The Valentine's Tea (see separate article below) February 17 and the March 31 Clean Sweep volunteer events.

Xavier at the Capital Area Food Bank gave one of the two teams the low down on products, like cereal, that needed to be opened and examined for holes on inside packaging and which products were unacceptable like badly dented cans. Did you know that mayonnaise is good for 3 months past its expiration date? There were two stations; one included a team of two persons that checked each product and wiped them down with a mild solution of bleach water. The items traveled down a conveyor belt to the second station where six people sorted and boxed the products by category, boxed them for weighting; then they were placed on pallets for storage and subsequent distribution. The second team worked with non-food items. They boxed, weighed and labeled items like beauty products, diapers and household

items and put them on pallets too. The volunteers representing the chapter were: Karla Starkweather, President; Brenda Dotson, Department of School Nutrition; Gina Garcia, Office of Rural Community Affairs; Linda Jackson, CGMP, Texas Alcohol Beverage Commission; her sister Christine Villarreal and Christine's son Michael; Nancy Ruiz, Thompson Conference Center UT; her husband Pat Bolin and I. We earned two certificates showing we helped process 12,500 pounds of food which equals 10,000 meals.



On March 31, we supported Clean Sweep by again cleaning the Balcones Woods District Park in northwest Austin. Last year, the event total of 15 tons of trash was bagged for the Parks and Recreation folks to pick up. The 'Thank You Party' at Festival Beach on Town Lake is a fun way to be appreciated for our efforts with live music and food.

I am grateful for all the chapter volunteers that give so freely of their time to support our community projects in Austin. Thank you all for your generosity.

SGMP 2007 Valentine Tea

by Nancy Ruiz, UT Thompson Conference Center

Love was in the air on Saturday, February 17, 2007, when nine "SGMP Sweethearts" gathered at the Heartland Health Care Center to host a Valentine Tea for the assisted living and nursing center residents. Punch, cookies, carnations and special gifts were distributed to the guests and entertainment was coordinated by Miss Leanne O'Donnell of Girl Scout Troop 1952. A program of music (flute and piano) and dance was enjoyed by all. The show was topped off by a 'sing along' featuring popular standards including, "You Are My Sunshine" and "Sentimental Journey."



Entertainment at the Valentine Tea.

The "SGMP Sweethearts" included Karla Starkweather, Nic Starkweather, Jim Zukowski, Anita Zukowski, Grace Nied, CGMP, Linda Jackson, CGMP, Michael Soto, Nancy Ruiz and Lanna Johnson. Many thanks go to all the chapter members who donated refreshments and gifts for the tea. We'd also like to give a big round of applause to the entertainers from Girl Scout Troop 1952, the Cedar Valley Middle School JAG Band, the Cedar Valley Middle School National Junior Honor Society and the Round Rock Repertory Dance Centre "Dantsers Troupe" for an enthusiastic and well-received performance .

Thanks to our Raffle Donors January—March

by Connie Ramos, Homewood Suites Austin South

Barbara Glaser Fryer-AVW, Bob Nichols, Brenda Dotson, Connie Fisher-Holiday Inn Town Lake, Connie Ramos-Homewood Suites Austin South, Deidra Davidson, Jaime Yount-Doubletree North, Janet Spies, Kristi Griffith-Woodward Hotel & Conference Center, Lanna Johnson, Lisa Ellison-Lubbock CVB, Lydia Starry, Mary Panella, Nancy Ruiz-Thompson Conference Center, Nancy Gil-Holiday Inns of Lubbock, Pat Streetman, Ramon Hernandez-Laredo CVB, Sindia Manarrez, Doubletree San Antonio, Sue Cullen-Speaker, Susie Ashcraft- Radisson South Padre Island

Help Wanted

The Communications Committee needs a volunteer who can take over the desktop publishing responsibilities of the quarterly newsletters. Karla Starkweather has been doing this task since last summer, but it's an additional workload for her on top of her chapter President responsibilities. Formatting the newsletter with 'off-the-shelf' software such as Publisher or Quark would facilitate this effort. If you are interested in helping us out, please contact Jim Zukowski (jim.zukowski@tsbde.state.tx.us) or Karla Starkweather (karla.starkweather@hhsc.state.tx.us) for more details.

Treasure Chest (cont'd from page 1)

The Sea Turtle Show was offered, the silent auction was set up and the exhibitors were able to display in a nearby meeting room, keeping us all in one area of the resort. The welcome reception sponsored by the Schlitterbahn Beach Waterpark topped off the night. During the reception, Kelly Roche, CGMP, and Traci Boyd wore turtle suits to collect donations for Sea Turtles, Inc. This organization is working to save the endangered sea turtles and our conference generously donated \$407.

Saturday we had a great breakfast sponsored by the Irving CVB, all the chapter presidents spoke and we had an awesome keynote address by David Stein. He spoke of the "Ten Deadly Sins of Presentations." Using humor and pictures, his visuals and interaction with attendees made for a great start. Attendees spent the rest of Saturday at the trade show, the silent auction room, lunch and the educational sessions in the afternoon. The silent auction had tons of great items and did extremely well this year. That



Theresa Nelson thanks our closing keynote speaker, Anne Pritchard.



Joyce Sparks led attendees in an interesting and interactive workshop. Look, no shoes!!



Kelly Roche and Traci Boyd dance in their turtle suits as they collect money for the charity.

evening closed with a dinner and dance in the resort ballroom featuring the "Blues Brothers." The event was sponsored by the South Padre Island CVB, Radisson Re-

sort South Padre and Radisson Hill Country Resort.

Sunday was a busy finish to the conference. We had another superb breakfast sponsored by the Wild West Chapter and the 2009 conference host, the last raffle of the conference, the closing keynote and thank you awards for the committee members and volunteers who helped make the conference another great SGMP event.

Our closing keynote speaker, Anne Pritchard, gave an inspiring presentation of "Taking It to the Next Level." She was able to touch on all types of personalities



The Blues Brothers entertain conference attendees after dinner on Saturday night.

and how we should interact with them plus 'High Payoff Activities' and how much time we should allot to them. She discussed how to set goals then measure them and how to cross the bridge from our current status towards our goals and desires. Her humor and personality were an appropriate ending to our conference. We learned a lot and played a lot! This was a signature SGMP event.

Thank you to all who participated by attending, donating to the raffle and silent auction and especially our sponsors and exhibitors who supported our conference financially. And a special thanks to this year's conference chair and co-chairs, Jaime Yount, Kelly Roche, CGMP, and Tracy Blair!!

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STAY YOUR OWN WAY™

Personal Development

Personal Safety and Empowerment Strategies

By Murray Moore, Texas Education Agency

Scott Stephens, of the Austin Police Department, gave an excellent presentation on personal safety and how we can feel more secure as we go about our daily lives. There are four basic 'empowerment strategies' you need to follow in any confrontation.

1. React immediately. We must react quickly and it must be preplanned. Visualize yourself in a situation and then think about how you would react.
2. Resist. Fight back with a definite plan for how you will handle the attacker or would-be attacker.
3. Don't go to crime scene #2. We must not allow the attacker to take us to another place.
4. NEVER, NEVER give up. Even if you are threatened with death or if you are wounded, keep on fighting and yelling.

There are certain habits you want to acquire. Always walk with confidence with your head up, looking at people when they approach. Have keys in your hand as you walk to your car or when you are going into your home. Don't carry too many items that you can't defend yourself. Always be aware of your surroundings, trust your instincts, develop a plan of action and re-action and have a back-up plan. If a stranger enters an elevator with you, stay close to the floor button panel so you can push all the buttons to stop every 20 seconds. Secure all the locks on the inside of your hotel room and always use the peep-hole to check out the person(s) at your door.



Scott Stephens demonstrates self defense techniques to Heather Hidalgo, CMP.

A large advertisement for Tyler, Texas, featuring a background of pink roses. The text reads: "Tyler... the REAL Rose of Texas". Below this, it says "BEST GOLF CITY IN TEXAS*", "LARGEST MUNICIPAL ROSE GARDEN IN THE NATION", and "ONE OF THE TOP SIX ZODS IN THE SOUTH**". There are three inset images: "Garden Valley Golf Resort" (a golf course), "Lake Palestine" (a lake with trees), and "Caldwell Zoo" (a lion). At the bottom, it says "Call for a free convention planner 800-235-5712 or visit www.tylertexas.com". A small logo for Tyler, Texas Conventions is also present. Footnotes at the bottom right state: "*according to Golf Digest Magazine" and "**according to Southern Living Magazine".

The ABCs of Convention & Visitors Bureaus

By Mary Panella, Retired

Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVB) act as marketing tools, bringing together tourism and sales for cities and communities. At times, they may operate as a part of the city government structure or as an independent operation that is linked to the municipality structure. They are seen as a long-term, unbiased resource for visitors and businesses alike. Maria Pappas, mpappas@norfolkcvb.com and Tasha Sawabini, tswabini@seeseattle.org, presenters at the 2006 National SGMP Conference in Denver, highlighted the many ways that CVB staff can assist government meeting professionals arrange and make their meetings a success.

Why work with a CVB? From distributing RFPs to developing post conference activities, CVBs can offer a multitude of services. They know various costs including taxes and can arrange for site inspections, schedule itineraries and lend staff to help with registration. They can help with sponsors if any are

available. They make planning and implementing a meeting less time-consuming and more streamlined. They help those meeting in and visiting a city to enjoy the historic, cultural and recreational opportunities that destination offers. Most services from the CVB are free. They do not receive “kick-backs” from the hotels used but they do need help from the meeting professional to 1) provide RFP content such as room nights, meeting agenda, meeting history and 2) identify flexibility points which can maximize value such as alternative dates and pattern options.

Don't forget to include CVB staff in your recognitions. Make sure to acknowledge to their bosses that they got you to their town or that they enhanced the meeting process and the use of area resources. Also give appropriate feedback when an experience or resource was not adequate. Everybody can learn from feedback given in an appropriate manner.

Look What's Ahead

May by *Marta Gutierrez*

Come have some fun at our May 10 meeting playing *Monopoly* with your fellow chapter members. *Meeting Monopoly* is this month's theme based on the actual Parker Brothers popular board game only it has been amended to reflect meeting planning scenarios. It was the '2005 Program of the Year' winner presented by the Old Dominion Chapter. Teams will compete for "meeting money" to acquire great fortunes--or you could also end up in the poor house! So come on out to the Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark and play with us.

June by *Lydia Starry, CMP*

For those of you that recently attended our regional conference in South Padre Island or attended the August 2006 retreat in College Station, we are pleased to announce that we were able to contract Ms. Anne Pritchard to speak at our June chapter meeting. Ms. Pritchard's presentation topic will be "Leadership." If you have not had the pleasure of listening to this motivated and dynamic lady, you are in for a really enlightening experience. Mark your calendars for Thursday, June 14, 2007.

July by *Jim Zukowski*

Our July 12, 2007, chapter meeting will be devoted to our annual silent auction. This event raises scholarship monies for our chapter members to benefit their attendance at the National SGMP Education Conference, along with our Regional Education Conference that is held earlier in the year. This year, our fundraising event will be held at the newly-renovated Crowne Plaza Hotel, formerly the Red Lion Hotel. The event at this same hotel last year raised more than \$4,000 to help support our membership. We are already seeking donations for the Silent Auction Event. Please contact Connie Ramos @connie_ramos@Hilton.com for the form indicating the type of donation you will be bringing. We want to make this silent auction event the best ever! Planners, as well as suppliers, are encouraged to donate to the event.

Travel Tips

By *Grace Nied, CGMP, Governor's Center for Management Development*

Working in the meeting planning industry usually means that we have to travel. Here are some of the things I've found to make traveling less stressful.

When flying, make your reservations early so you can get the flights you prefer. Morning flights are less likely to be delayed and non-stop or direct flights offer fewer opportunities for delays and lost luggage. If you must have connecting flights, try to avoid the larger airports that are prone to delays due to weather or high traffic. Check in on-line up to 24 hours before your flight and get to the airport early so you're not rushed. Use TSA approved locks for

your checked baggage and be sure to follow TSA guidelines for aerosols in carry-containers that fit sealable plastic

Spinners so much easier on ears hurt when planes, amazingize the pressure at your fa-

Sign up for programs at hotels. Most have special perks on every stay, not just for reward redemption. Perks might include expedited check-in and check-out, upgraded rooms, rooms on a special floor, special amenities (bottled water, snacks), your preference of room location, preferred bedding, etc.

With a little advance planning, you can arrive at your destination relaxed and ready to enjoy your meeting or vacation.



Use TSA approved locks for your checked baggage and be sure to follow TSA guidelines for aerosols in carry-containers that fit sealable plastic

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Member Spotlight

Supplier Spotlight: Kacie Sicilia, CHSP

by Curtis J. Thames, Jr., CMP, U.S. Department of Treasury



Several years ago when my co-worker at the time, Heather Hidalgo, CMP, introduced me to SGMP, she said that SGMP had not only some of the best suppliers in Texas, but some of the best people too. Meeting Kacie Sicilia, CHSP, at SGMP proved that point very strongly to me. When Kacie greets you with that beautiful and infectious smile, hugs you and says hello, you know that she is sincere. Kacie

is the Government and Association Sales Manager for the Holiday Inn Emerald Beach Hotel in Corpus Christi. This hotel has been a member of the SGMP Texas Lone Star Chapter for more than 20 years and Kacie has been their representative and active member for the past nine years. She has worked for the hotel for 16 years.

Kacie is a true Texan (born in Fort Worth) and the daughter of Retired Colonel Ed Conley and Patricia A. Conley, both of Shreveport, Louisiana. Kacie and her husband, Paul, met at their best friends' wedding in June of 1984 and were married in December of 1986. They have a son, Shawn, who is finishing college at LSU in Shreveport where both their parents and many siblings reside. Kacie and Paul moved to Fort. Smith, Ark., in 1986. Kacie started her sales career at the Fort Smith Holiday

Inn City Center and had a great mentor there, Dana Taylor. They remain dear friends and cohorts in the hospitality industry.

Kacie and Paul moved to Corpus Christi in 1991. Kacie joined the team at the Holiday Inn Emerald Beach as their Catering/Office Manager (since there were no sales positions available at the time). She accepted this challenge and thought she could better serve meeting planners by learning the "back of the house" operations - which she did for the next six years. It was a great learning experience for her. She believes all sales managers should learn operations. She said, "Only then can you fully understand the process of partnering, delivering and following through as a whole with your meeting professional." In 1998 Kacie eagerly moved into Sales and has been smiling and loving every minute of it.

Kacie loves the business networking and friendship building that SGMP affords everyone. And she believes her military upbringing gives her great respect and appreciation for understanding protocol, procedures and policies of government. Kacie is also one of only two industry partners in Corpus Christi who earned a CHSP certification. Kacie loves the life and career she has built for herself in Corpus Christi. Kacie and Paul enjoy entertaining in their Padre Island home, fishing and boating and adore their Shih-Tzu daughter-dog, Chrysie! Kacie, thanks for being our SGMP Supplier Spotlight and continued success!

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Planner Spotlight: Robert Gonzalez

by Jim Deuser, McAllen Convention and Visitors Bureau

I am pleased to introduce to the membership a new friend, Robert Gonzalez. Robert spent a large part of his early life in the Rio Grande Valley, attending school at McAllen High. Robert is married to Rosa and they have two boys, ages 7 and 11. Robert's hobbies include sailing on Lake Travis in his 21-foot Aquarius sailboat.

Robert has an extensive background in media, an interest that goes back to his high school days in McAllen where he took classes in radio and television production. He even worked at a radio station while growing up. An early job at St. Edwards University exposed him to event planning but he soon returned to graduate school in radio-television-film studies at the University of Texas, Austin. This led to work with National Public Radio, Latino USA, a syndicated football program, and Galan Productions. "It was at Latino USA that I continued to have responsibilities in event planning and thought there is no way one can have a career in planning such fun events."

About six years ago, the Commission on State Emergency Communications offered him an opportunity to work in promoting important 9/11 messages to the public as well as assuming conference planning responsibilities. Robert said, "I generally initiate site selection and handle various aspects of planning an annual 9/11 industry conference. Later, I work with a committee board that changes every year (very challenging) on getting the

conference accomplished."

Robert is a newcomer to SGMP, although he's been a planner for 6 years at the Commission on State Emergency Communications. "Time is tight with all the weekly deadlines and I needed help," he noted. "Omni supplier, Leanne Hallisey invited me to join and now I'm getting the input I need from the industry." Robert joined SGMP in October 2006. He is part of the newsletter committee and has participated in the Capital Area Food Bank Day.

Robert commented, "Being an SGMP member certainly has its advantages. Since I joined, I have been better able to keep a pulse on the industry trends that affect our conference schedule. SGMP allows me ample opportunity to get to know all the suppliers that are within the metro areas that our conference serves. The Austin CVB, for example, was most helpful in getting our conference message out with their e-blasts, an invaluable tool that I will be sure to use every year from now on. I have not been a member for too long but I have already met a lot of genuine people that are more than ready to help with sound advice and recommendations regardless of where the business may end up. I look forward to being a member of SGMP and pursuing my CMP status in the future."



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Industry News

Bed Bugs are Really Taking a Bite!

by Jim Zukowski, Texas Board of Dental Examiners

Last year, I wrote an article on the increase in bed bugs at hotels throughout the country. It was recently reported that one of London's most expensive hotels is facing an embarrassing multi-million-dollar compensation claim after an American lawyer and his wife were attacked by bed bugs during a recent stay. Sidney Bluming, a prominent New York celebrity lawyer, and his wife, are suing the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, owner of the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, after staying at the fashionable London hotel last year. According to the lawsuit, the Blumings were bitten hundreds of times during their five-night stay leaving their skin red, swollen, and itchy.

A spokesperson for Mr. Bluming, whose clients include Elizabeth Taylor and Claudia Schiffer, indicated that most individuals associate bed bugs with more of a lower-end class of hotel. However, the Mandarin is a premier and luxurious hotel. The hotel has one of the most prestigious



Cimex lectularius. This image is a work of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

addresses in downtown London and offers a variety of opulent rooms. Room rates begin at over \$800/night. A spokesperson for the hotel confirmed that there had been "a regrettable but isolated incident of infestation within one guest room. There have been no subsequent incidents at the hotel."

According to the lawsuit, the bed bugs nested in the Blumings' clothes and luggage, traveling back with them to New York where the attacks continued until they fumigated their apartment and threw away clothes, bed sheets and other personal items. The Blumings claim that they were humiliated by the ugly red marks the bites left on their skin and were haunted by fears of further bites, causing them to wake up in the middle of the night with real or imagined biting. The lawsuit accuses the hotel group of fraud, deceptive trade practice, negligence, recklessness, intentional infliction of emotional distress and nuisance.

Adapted from Times Online, January 16, 2007.

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Ten Presentation Tips

by Jaime Yount, DoubleTree Hotel Austin

Most of us would rather not be first in line to give a presentation, but in our business it's part of the job. Lynne Breil, an Adjunct Professor of Communications and Business Administration at York College of PA, revealed ten tips for presenting your ideas and opinions at work and to audiences. Her ten tips are listed below.



Jaime Yount practices his presentation skills at the 2007 Regional Conference.

1. Know and involve your audience. Secure their interest by letting them know "What's in it for them" (WIIFT).
2. Be familiar with your surroundings, your timing and your resources. Folks usually don't mind if you wrap things up early, but don't keep your audience longer than expected.
3. Organize your message. Use an interesting fact or attention-getting introduction. Themes are good. Touch on three to five points. Use a memorable close. Quotes work well if it ties in.
4. Add some interest with a story. Experience shared equals passion.
5. Visual aids can move things along. Sound effects can distract from message(s).
6. Look the part and dress for success. Casual dress can hinder your message. If you are presenting, you should be more formal than your audience.
7. Use eye contact and hand gestures. Don't scan the audience faces. Stop at one face, deliver the thought and move to the next. Don't use small gestures like a Tyrannosaurus Rex. It feels funny but use larger gestures.
8. Avoid slang, jargon and acronyms. Use a conversational style.
9. Prepare for questions. Know your subject, but it's alright if you don't know the answer.
10. Practice!!! Don't wing it! Practice in front of a mirror or trusted friend.

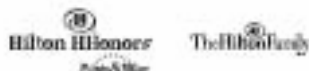
Keep in mind these simple tips for your next successful presentation. If you would like more information, please visit www.theprofessionaledgeinc.com.

This is a synopsis of the presentation by Lynne Breil at the 2006 SGMP National Education Conference.

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Technology News

Techno News

by Jim Zukowski, Texas Board of Dental Examiners

James Spellos, CMP and president of Meeting U., created ‘The Meeting Professionals Guide to Understanding and Using the Internet.’ This consists of a list of 99 web sites every meeting professional must know about. Below is a portion of this list, the third and last of the series. For more information about Meeting U. see the web site: <http://www.meeting-u.com>.

| Portable Digital Assistant (PDA) & Wireless Resources | |
|--|--|
| www.cesinc.com | Makers of Quick Office program that allows you to create, edit and read and share Word and Excel documents on your PDA. |
| www.davespda.com | Portal and PDA resource to help select and purchase PDA's (Palm and Pocket PC). |
| www.eventcentric.com | Provider of web-based & wireless applications for meetings industry. |
| www.nearspace.com | Meeting-based applications (and others) for PDA and WAP smartphones. |
| www.pdastreet.com | Info on products & user groups for all PDA brands. |
| www.vindigo.com | Application providing local city information (dining, entertainment) for many cities. |
| Professional Organizations | |
| www.conventionindustry.org | Convention Industry Council - Organization that oversees CMP exam. |
| www.hsmi.org | National HSMI website. |
| www.iacvb.org | International Association of Convention & Visitors Bureau website. Planners can send RFPs through this location. |
| www.mpiweb.org | National MPI website. |
| www.pcma.org | National PCMA website. |
| Search Engines & Portals | |
| www.google.com | Most extensive regular search engine on internet. |
| www.mezzofanti.org/translation/ | Translation services portal. |
| www.refdesk.com | Extensive reference capabilities on almost anything. |
| Site Selection & RFP for Services | |
| www.allhotels.com | Extensive sub-category search (eg. luxury, economy). Has large international inventory, some with destination maps. |
| www.bestcities.net | International alliance of convention bureaus, with CVB – RFP capabilities. |
| www.cvbhotrates.com | IACVB-endorsed search engine to locate hot rates in selected cities. |
| www.cvbreps.com | DC-based portal to 50+ CVB cities, allowing planner to communicate and send leads directly to bureau. |
| www.getitplanet.com | A global buyers and seller marketplace, allowing planner to find various services – complete with internal, e-bay style rating system. |
| www.madsearch.com | Search engine, locate meeting services as well. |
| www.meetingpath.com | New England based search. |
| www.mpoint.com | Extensive information with panoramic room inspections; large industry portal. |
| www.openworld.co.uk | Luxury searches, international in focus. |
| www.resortsource.com | Focus on resort searching. |
| www.starcite.com | Extensive search engine, with RFP and auction features. Includes Regweb online registration software. |
| www.uniquevenues.com | Search for alternative meeting facilities – formerly theguide.com. |
| Speaker Bureaus | |
| www.nationalspeakers.com | Good speaker subject search engine. |
| www.speakersdirect.com | Online marketplace for speakers and the people who book them. |
| Virtual Tours | |
| www.hotelview.com | Library of hotel videos on the web. |
| www.virtualvisit.ca | Multi-faceted virtual property tour services. |



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Chapter Meeting
Business Etiquette
Renaissance Austin Hotel
9721 Arboretum Blvd.

May 10, 2007

Chapter Meeting
Meeting Monopoly
Omni Austin Hotel Southpark
4140 Governor's Row

June 14, 2007

Chapter Meeting
Leadership Principles & Installation of New Board
Location to be determined
Sponsored by Waco CVB

July 12, 2007

Chapter Meeting
Silent Auction & Community Involvement Volunteer
Crowne Plaza Hotel
6121 North IH 35

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