

Lone Star News

Award Winning Newsletter

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

www.sgmpaustin.org

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2nd Quarter 2008

2008 SGMP ANNUAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE — DALLAS

Robert Gonzalez, Commission on State Emergency Communications

THIS PAST JUNE, Texans and out of state guests were treated like royalty at the Hilton Anatole Hotel in Dallas, site of the 2008 SGMP Annual Education Conference. By now, folks have reviewed their session notes, printed out their favorite conference pictures, and fully recuperated from what was a very successful event.

The Education Conference kicked off with the traditional welcome reception on Wednesday evening. Attendees boarded buses and headed out “wagon train style” to Eddie Deen’s Ranch in downtown Dallas. After getting a mighty Texas welcome from Wednesday night’s sponsors, guests were able to head on over for a full spread of Eddie Deen’s world renowned BBQ. While folks settled in their seats and enjoyed dinner, SGMP president, Melody Kebe, CMP, CGMP welcomed everyone to a much anticipated education conference. As the evening continued with musical entertainment, people flocked to the dance floor to participate in line dancing with a group the size Lone Stars could be proud of. With the “Texas-sized fanfare” that evening, guests made new friends, mingled with old acquaintances, traded their chapter lapel pins, participated in real live armadillo races and even had the opportunity to get drawings of their own hineys (we know you got yours done).

SGMP Community Project

Every year SGMP selects a local charity as its annual project and this year was no exception. “Heroes for Children” based in Richardson helps

bring relief to families whose children are undergoing various stages of cancer.

SGMP was proud to present the local non-profit with more than \$7,000 of contributions made possible by its dedicated members. According to director and co-founder, Jenny Scott, at least 15 families will receive help in the Dallas area, thus lifting some of the financial burden that is carried by each family during this great time of need.

Opening Session/Keynote

It’s not very often that one gets to enjoy breakfast with an Olympic gold medalist. For our opening session on Thursday, SGMP members were in for an inspirational treat as the keynote speaker, Dominique Dawes, paved the way for our opening session with her unique formula called “D-3” — Determination, Dedication, and Desire. Dominique Dawes was the first female African American gymnast to win an individual Olympic Gold medal.

Drawing from her experience as an athlete where she worked hard

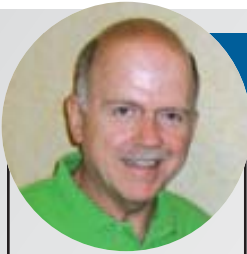
Continued on Page 7



Inside
this
Issue

page 2	President’s Message Board Buzz Financial Report
page 3	Membership Update Upcoming Events
page 4	Community Involvement Committee
page 5	April Meeting
page 6	May Meeting
page 7	June Meeting
pages 8, 9	Conference Highlights Continued
page 10	Meeting Planning
page 11	CGMP Update
page 12	Professional Development
page 14	Member Spotlight
page 15	Supplier Spotlight
page 16	Industry News
page 17	Professional Development
page 18	Member Tidbits/ SGMP Board of Directors
page 20	SGMP Planning Calendar





**JIM
ZUKOWSKI**

*Be a part
of your
organization!*



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

AS WE HEAD INTO THE SUMMER MONTHS, please DO NOT consider taking a vacation away from SGMP. The summer program agendas promise to be exciting. After recovering from the SGMP National Conference early in June, we now need to set our eyes on our all-important July Silent Auction. The Silent Auction is one of our primary means for raising scholarship monies to deserving recipients. Either planners or suppliers are encouraged to donate silent auction items. Along with our silent auction, we are planning to hold a live auction at the same meeting. From past experience, the live auction has been a tremendous success and raises the stakes on donated items. Plan to attend and actively participate in the event. Additionally, our "Volunteer of the Year" Award will be announced at the July event.

Our August retreat is scheduled the first weekend in August at the Hilton NASA hotel located near the NASA Space Center outside of Friendswood, Texas. Besides having an active educational program, the retreat will offer us the opportunity to brain storm on program topics for our 2009 calendar year. In conjunction with this event, the retreat is also a venue for members to bring their families and explore the surrounding areas. Kemah Amusement Area is just a few minutes away. Another few miles down the road, you can experience the sights and sounds of Galveston with its wonderful beach and fine seafood dining. Plan to attend and make an active contribution to our "Brainstorming Session" which allows us to select topics for our educational programs.

Our May 2008 education program on "Getting to Know your Chapter" was a huge success. We were able to achieve a renewed membership on the part of chapter members. Several members signed up for committee participation in an effort to contribute to the organization. The more involvement you have with this organization yields greater rewards for you in your government meeting planning activities. Additionally, the networking and partnership opportunities gained through committee participation are endless. *Be a part of your organization!* ★

Board Buzz



Rob Casias, National Guard Association of Texas

IN THE LAST ISSUE OF THE LONE STAR NEWS, I highlighted one of our supplier board members and treasurer Donna Cottle, CMP, CHSC. This issue I want to spotlight one of our planner board members: Ms. Kathy Casarez, of the Texas State Bar. Kathy has been a member of SGMP for over 14 years and currently serves as the chair of our chapter Community Involvement Committee (CIC). The chair of the CIC is a volunteer time intensive effort; however, this is the committee that puts the SGMP face out to our community by supporting our local charities and foundations. This year under Kathy's direction, the committee has participated in the "Feast of Sharing," "Blue Santa," "Lisa's Hope Chest," and "Capital Area Food Bank" programs. Kathy and her committee have consistently represented our chapter well by contributing both time and donations to these local charities. Presently, Kathy's committee is gearing up for the "Heroes for Children" — a non-profit program that provides both financial and social assistance to families of children (between the ages of 11-22 years of age) who are battling cancer. In addition to her CIC meetings, Kathy attends our chapter monthly meetings as well as the monthly board of directors meetings — and every time you see or hear her, it's always with a cheerful smile or friendly laughter. Kathy is always looking for volunteers to serve on the CIC committee, so if you are interested in joining, please e-mail Kathy at kcasarez@texasbar.com. ★

FINANCIAL REPORT

*Donna Cottle, CMP, CHSC,
Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau*

Income

March, April, May 2008

Monthly Meeting Dues	\$ 1,247.00
Raffles	495.00
Cook Books	20.00
Revenue Share from National . .	3,247.50
No Shows Collected	20.00
Sponsorship Ad-Newsletter	900.00
Dividend-Money Market	72.26
	\$ 6,086.76

Expenses

\$10,618.07

(\$5,077.19 was for scholarships)



Ed Howard, Chair, Hilton Hotel Austin Airport

Current Member Statistics

45.9% government planners
3.8% contract planners
49.7% total planners
50.4% suppliers

Membership Statistics

73 government planners
6 contract planners
80 suppliers
10 retired
169 total members

Welcome Our Newest Members

Planners

Yolanda Odom, State Bar of Texas
 Angle Abitua, Texas General Land Office
 Mary Wieser, United States Army North
 Roberta Bilsky, Texas General Land Office
 Jeanette Allison, Texas Architectural Foundation

Suppliers

Dianne Sassenhagen, San Antonio CVB
 Ernie Arredondo, McAllen CVB
 Jan Allen, Holiday Inn Town Lake
 Joe Bedsole, Arlington CVB
 Susan Greenberg, CMP, CASE, Embassy Suites Hotel — Austin North
 Norm Toering, Radisson Hotel & Suites Town Lake Austin
 Linda Caldwell, Marriott International
 Lesa Labar, LaCopa Inn Beach Front Resort
 Nevela Pedraza, San Antonio CVB

THANK YOU FOR RENEWING

Lori Rhodes, Keena and Company | Shirley DeBerry, Advocacy Incorporated | Monica Guerra, Texas General Land Office | Silvestre "Sly" Guzman, Youth Advocate Programs | Stacy Janecka, CMP, Office of the Attorney General | Rose Tierney-Gumaer, University of Texas Health Science Center | Dottie Bossley, Galveston Island CVB | Diane Cayce, Fort Worth CVB | Brittany Robbins, Hyatt Regency San Antonio on the Riverwalk | Kacie Sicilia, CHSP, Holiday Inn Emerald Beach | Kay Summerville, Plano CVB | Brenda Teichroeb, CHSP, CMP, R.K. Group | Nancy Van Bramer, Renaissance Austin Hotel | Nancy Yawn, Round Rock, CVB | Keena Collins, CMP, CGMP, Keena and Company | Michele Leija, University of Texas System | Heather McBride, Texas Historical Commission | Kelli Wise, Texas Department of Agriculture | Vicki Goldman, Advantage Rent A Car | Melissa Janda, Omni San Antonio Hotel | Brenda Rodriguez, Holiday Inn Riverwalk | Carissa Smith, Omni Austin Hotel Downtown | Linda Wade, CEM, Convention Decorating Service, Inc. | Linda Jackson, CGMP, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission | Diane Stallings, CMP, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality | Curtis J. Thames, Jr., CMP, Internal Revenue Service

UPCOMING EVENTS

August Summer Seminar



August 1-3, 2008, Save the Date! The Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter and the Houston Gulf Coast Chapter invite you to attend the Meeting Professionals Summer Seminar. The seminar will be held at the Hilton NASA Clear Lake Hotel and open on Friday, August 1, 2008, at 1:00 p.m. with an educational session that will benefit both planners and suppliers.

We have added several educational workshops that will prove to be fun, interactive and terrific learning opportunities to the Summer Seminar. Topics will be relevant to both planners and suppliers. You will be receiving more information about the educational program very soon.

The host hotel is the Hilton NASA Clear Lake Hotel, 3000 NASA Parkway, Houston, Texas. The room block is listed as Lone Star Boot Camp and the rate is \$59.00 Planners and \$119.00 Suppliers, for reservations, please call 1-281-333-9300. Registration rates are as follows: Planners, Suppliers and Guests \$30.00 for Early Registration and Supplier Non-members \$50.00. For additional details and to register online, visit www.sgmpaustin.org.

Sponsorship opportunities are available; please contact Linda Jackson, CGMP, at 512-206-3209 or Linda.Jackson@tabc.state.tx.us.

September Monthly Meeting



September is the ninth month of the year in the Gregorian calendar and one of four Gregorian months with 30 days. September 11 is the two hundred and fifty fourth day of the year. Construction of the Pentagon began on this day in 1941, sadly becoming a terrorist target sixty years later. As we mark the seventh anniversary of this event we invite you to put the Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter's (TLSCC) monthly education meeting on your calendar in **red**. This month's event is important for two special reasons. The Waco CVB is sponsoring the event at Chez Zee and is planning an exceptional and lively event. Joyce Sparks of the Governor's Center for Management Development will be our guest speaker presenting "Playing Well Together: The Good, the Bad and You've Got To Be Kidding!" We can expect to learn why the ability to work collaboratively with others is a critical skill in today's organization.

With organizational, generational, and personality differences, "playing nice" can sometimes be a challenge. In this session we will identify language and practices that facilitate effective collaboration. Joyce Sparks, a member of TLSCC, is a Master Certified Coach (MCC) and Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) who has testified in Federal Congressional hearings, and has provided leadership development and/or coaching sessions for executive officials from across the United States as well as Canada, Eastern Europe, India, Brazil, Africa, and Australia. If you seek to attend an informative and energetic presentation, then make sure the September Education Program is on your calendar.

SGMP COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

Kathy Casarez, Chair, State Bar of Texas

OUR MARCH PROJECT had us up early on a Saturday morning to assist at the Capital Area Food Bank of Texas. The mission of the Capital Area Food Bank of Texas (CAFB) is to nourish hungry people and lead the community in ending hunger. In its 27th year of service, the Capital Area Food Bank of Texas currently provides food and grocery products to 370 partner agencies in 21 Central Texas counties. In 2007, CAFB distributed more than 15 million pounds of food. The CAFB service area covers 19,064 square miles in Central Texas.



We were assigned with the task of sorting frozen meats and other packaged food products. It was quite interesting to see the various cuts of beef, poultry and pork products that came down the conveyer belt. We saw everything from pig's feet to cow's hearts and cow's tongue to tripe (the cow's stomach lining) which, by the way is one of my favorites. In my culture we boil tripe into a soup-like recipe called "menuo." You definitely have to acquire a taste for it. We also sorted a variety of canned goods and other non-perishables. Much of the food items that we separated were for the Kids Café program. This program serves more than 25,000 meals per month to more than 2,800 children in need. This after-school program provides a safe, nurturing place where neighborhood children receive a hot, nutritious dinner, as well as help with homework from caring individuals. It was formed to provide school children with nutritious meals. It was a great experience and I would like to thank Jeanette Allison, Patrick Bodin, Ryan Casarez, Nancy Ruiz, Karla Starkweather and Geri Whitley for their time and energy.



In April, May and June, we focused on collecting donations for the national charity, Heroes for Children, which provides support to children battling cancer. A total of \$231 was collected and donated on behalf of the chapter. The community involvement committee would like to extend an invitation to all chapter members to join our committee. If you are interested or have an organization you feel could use our assistance please contact me at kcasarez@texasbar.com or by phone at 512/427-1419. ★



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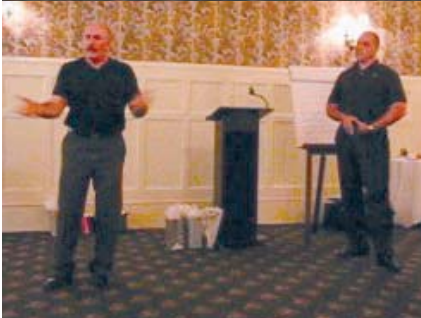
APRIL MONTHLY MEETING: Safety and Security for the Meeting Professional

Robert Gonzalez, Commission on State Emergency Communications

SECURITY TIPS FOR SGMP MEMBERS ON THE GO

HOW PREPARED ARE YOU to defend yourself against a possible predator who is threatening your life? Representatives from ASTEP, Inc. posed that question at the April 10, 2008, Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter meeting. Robert Williams, president and owner of ASTEP, presented Security and Safety for the Meeting Planner. Through interactive participation both Robert and his colleague, Troy Ross, showed members how to watch out for potentially dangerous situations. Using a series of exercises, some that required loud grunting, members went through several scenarios that could potentially save their life if confronted with a predator. In one exercise our own Ed Howard and Jim Zukowski were assigned the task of playing a “bad guy” and were supplied with NERF™ guns together with a healthy round of darts. ASTEP then provided members with the proper pointers and allowing at least a 90 percent survival rate with the mock attack. Heather Hidalgo even whacked our bad guys with a NERF™ billy club. Both Robert and Troy gave us eye-opening statistics and other data that made the members understand the ongoing potential of predators on the prowl for victims. Next time you pump gas, you may kick your special tactics into gear as you become proactive in protecting yourself.

April's meeting was hosted by a fine group of folks. A really big thank you to Darlene Morgan, Crowne Plaza Houston North, Keena Collins, Keena & Company, and Susan Travis, Tyler CVB. Aside from the adrenaline rush we had during ASTEP's presentation, we had a delightful time with all the food and beverage selections at the Green Pastures Restaurant. If we had judges, a score of 10, 10, and 10 would have been awarded to the tempura lobster tails. ★



Robert Williams, president and owner of ASTEP, presented Security and Safety for the Meeting Planner



Jim Zukowski and Keena Collins



Darlene Morgan, Jason Sechrest, Connie Fisher



Members enjoy great food and conversation at the April meeting.

MAY MONTHLY MEETING: Chapter Presents an SGMP Civics Lesson!

Jim Deuser, McAllen CVB

JUST AS MANY PEOPLE ARE PROUD to call themselves Americans, but know little about our history and how our country actually works, we members of SGMP frequently don't really know that much about this wonderful organization. On Thursday evening, May 8th, those attending the chapter monthly meeting received a "SGMP civics and history lesson" along with a delightful dinner and another opportunity to network with our chapter partners. Fajitas, shrimp, egg rolls, and other tasty items were on the menu. Sponsors of the May meeting were the Hilton Garden Inn (Connie Fisher), Corpus Christi CVB (Wilma Harvey) and the Holiday Inn Emerald Beach in Corpus Christi (Kacie Sicilia, CHSP).

Jim Zukowski introduced Connie Fisher who led us in an exercise which involved folding and tearing corners off of construction paper. We all followed instructions to the best of our ability — and we all ended up with different holes in the paper. Of course, from this we all learned that we approach life and issues from a different perspective. This set the stage for breakout groups led by teams of veteran SGMP members. Kim Kizer and Donna Cottle, CMP, CHSC, Jim Zukowski and Rob Casias, and Karla Starkweather and Linda Jackson, CGMP teamed up to lead three groups in break-out discussions of the benefits of SGMP membership. There were lots of questions thrown at those participating, with lots of rewards for correct answers. Throughout each group, a common theme appeared which was "we do business with those we know and we know our SGMP partners the best." In other words, networking is perhaps the biggest benefit in SGMP. We also learned that "we learn the most from the people we know best" and again, SGMP meets this need informally through networking and formally with the educational component in each and every meeting we have. Participation in one of the five standing committees not only benefits SGMP, but also is another key to successful networking. Membership, Education, Newsletter, Community Involvement, and Fundraising (for scholarships to educational SGMP events) are each chaired by a chapter board member. Each member is encouraged to serve in one of these committees and even those who don't live near Austin can participate. ★



May meeting break out session.



Karla Starkweather, Jaime Yount, Tina Teague



Jim Zukowski and May Host Kacie Sicilia, Holiday Inn Emerald Beach, Corpus Christi



May Host Connie Fisher



*May Host Wilma Harvey
Corpus Christi CVB*

JUNE MEETING: The Good, the Bad and the Options!

Murray Moore, Texas Education Agency/INCLB

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO A MEETING when time ran out and you wished there were more time? That's exactly what happened at our June meeting. The Holiday Inn Austin Town Lake hosted our event and Paul Boudreaux (GM)/Jan Allen (sales manager) did a super job with the food and room setup.

Our moderator, Scott Joslove, President and CEO, Texas Hotel & Lodging Association, led our panelists through a discussion about current and future trends in government meetings. Panelists included Stacy Janecka, CMP, Office of the Attorney General, Kelly Roche, CGMP, Irving CVB, and Jaime Yount, Doubletree Hotel.

Scott gave an overview of where we are with government meetings — what's going on: rates, economy, legislative process, how per diem is established. The panel commented on their ideas about what state employees can do legally to help change the landscape of government meeting planning. The audience was invited to participate as well. Can we lobby? Can we advise? Can we be a resource witness? What are the “do's and don'ts?” What are the major cities doing to help or hinder meetings being brought to their locations? These are just some of the questions examined.

State and Federal per diem were two items that were scrutinized at length. The per diem affects what meetings hoteliers want to book at their properties. The rising cost of fuel is currently a major concern and shrinks many travel budgets. Another issue was “full service” hotels versus “limited services” hotels.

A big Austin thank you to the Holiday Inn Austin Town Lake and our esteemed panelists for making this a very successful meeting. ★



Panelists for the June meeting: Kim Kizer, Scott Joslove, Kelly Roche, CGMP, Stacy Janecka, CMP, and Jaime Yount.

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2008 SGMP ANNUAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE — DALLAS

Continued from Page 1

to achieve her goals, Dawes shared her personal and professional philosophy to face one's challenges and achieve personal goals. "You must first envision the accomplishment that you want in life," says Dawes.

"Dream your vision in your mind. Picture it." Dawes suggests that one also engage in a passion to achieve profound and personal growth. She says, at age 11 she found her passion to be in gymnastics. She encouraged and challenged us to seek the one thing that we love to do and then learn from others who have found their passion so that we can learn how to practice that same dedication. She explains that to follow our passion we should each create a plan that becomes part of our daily routine. With both vision and plan in hand, you are destined to fulfill your vision into a reality. During our road to success we will undoubtedly face challenges. According to Dawes, she says, "Accept these challenges and work it out and you will develop the character to persevere."

Breakfast Session

Longtime friend and supporter of SGMP, Dr. Dale Henry, was our Keynote speaker on Friday morning. For those not familiar with Dr. Henry it did not take long to quickly warm up to his Tennessee hospitality. His natural ability to relate his personal experiences in such a humorous way also encouraged us to take the time out of our busy schedule and experience the things that are important to us. Dr. Henry was able to help us conjure up those special moments in our life and reminded us to commit to making sure they remain important now and in the future.

Awards Ceremony

The 26th Annual Gilmer Awards Luncheon got underway with a glimpse of next year's site of the SGMP Education Conference. With the luncheon being sponsored by the Louisville Convention and Visitors Bureau, they kindly treated us to a taste of SGMP's national conference in 2009 by allowing everyone to participate in our very own miniature Kentucky Derby race. Each luncheon guest was randomly assigned a horse, which was soon followed by cheers and yelling while everyone watched an actual Kentucky Derby race play out on the big screen. If you were fortunate enough to be seated at lucky #2's horse, Victoire Bataille, you became the proud owner of the centerpiece table gift. Great fun was had by all!

Shortly afterwards we were treated to an inspirational artist's rendering from Visual Mpack. He really captivated everyone's attention as his paintbrush danced across a mural, producing a patriotic American Eagle, as the music played.

As the awards luncheon pushed forward, our very own Grace Nied, CGMP, was nominated for "Sam Gilmer Planner of the Year" while the Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter received the honor of 2nd place for "Newsletter of the Year." The North Texas chapter took 1st place in the newsletter competition. Good going Texas!

Exhibit Hall

Nearly 400 exhibitors filled the Trinity exhibit hall as SGMP members mixed, mingled, and presented their RFPs. In addition to hoteliers we also had several other groups available who service our industry ranging from signage to audiovisual and software providers. The Gilmer Institute even had their own stage where they also presented various sessions to members.

The SGMP Education Conference ended with a fiesta on Friday evening. Early in the evening we had mariachis and later a live DJ had people up and dancing even though we were already dealing with some good Texas heat. It was a fantastic week for meeting planners and suppliers with outstanding sessions, great camaraderie, and a lot of fun. We all came out of the conference with a great amount of enthusiasm and knowledge. Let's do this again next year in Louisville, Kentucky! ★



STAY AND MEET AUSTIN STYLE

"Austin Bound" painted in 2005 by Karen Maness

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National President Melody Kebe and Joyce Sparks.



Armadillo races.



Joyce Sparks and Bob Nichols.



Michelle Moura and Ed Howard attending a session.



Members line dancing at opening reception.

WILL YOU BE READY WHEN DISASTER STRIKES?

Heather Hidalgo, CMP, Texas Justice Court Training Center



AS SOON AS I SAW THE TOPIC “Emergency Preparedness” in the course descriptions of the SGMP Annual Education Conference I knew I needed to attend this session. With as many seminars as we hold we do not have an emergency plan for all possible situations.

Lynette Schick certainly raised our awareness for the need to design plans for the numerous types of emergencies we may encounter as meeting planners. The main types are natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, and

snow storms. Of course where your meeting is located dictates which would most commonly affect you. Other emergencies that may occur are labor strikes or protests, bomb threats and/or terrorism, medical emergencies — remember Legionnaires Disease or SARS which had a huge impact on the meetings industry in Toronto? Potential on-site crises in descending order are: fire, structural damage, bomb threat, accidents, employee strike, terrorist attack, biological hazard, shooting, workplace violence, natural disaster, protests and lockdown. In a PCMA study 49.5% of planners reported having no disaster plan in place.

Building a response plan is critical. But with so many possible scenarios this is not an easy task. First form your crisis management team and access the possible risks, then devise an emergency plan based on your findings. The higher the risk, the more senior the members should be. Each person should have a specific job to avoid chaos. For a low risk you may only have the meeting planner and CSM on the team; for a higher risk you could include the hotel's General Manager and possibly the police, EMS and other city officials. Gather information during your site inspection or pre-con to locate the nearest fire department and hospital. Find out the city and the hotel's emergency response plans to different scenarios and the appropriate contacts for each. Have your emergency plan tie in with theirs. Know what is going on in the city during the time of your meeting that might affect you and partner with the hotel and local authorities to find solutions. Also collect attendee emergency contact information on your registration form.

All possible emergencies have certain responses in common but each has responses that are unique to their situation. Each plan should be specific to the type of emergency and tailored to the event.

Natural Disasters: Make sure your facility contract protects you from attrition for those who cannot make it to the meeting due to “Acts of God”. Find out the city, county and state plans for dealing with natural disasters and communicate that with the facility and your disaster response team. Make contingency plans for the most likely situations, i.e., A. if airports close, or B: storms knock out power in the facility. Set up a toll-free phone number that attendees can call for updates and place weather updates on your website.

Power Outages: Learn the facility's procedures. Do they have back-up generators and what will they support and for how long? How do they

communicate with guests and relocate them if necessary? I experienced this just recently at a hotel when a city transformer was malfunctioning. The power went out three times during out meeting — which shut down the AV, lighting and also the air-conditioning! But the back-up generator kept the elevators and emergency lighting going. The hotel handled it quite well by turning off the power from midnight to 5 a.m. in order for the city to replace the transformer. Communicating this plan to the attendees was key.

Fires: Get in writing that the facility is compliant with local fire safety regulations. Learn the fire evacuation procedures and routes for each meeting room, for guests while sleeping, and for those with disabilities. Provide your team with written evacuation procedures.

Strikes: Find out when the facility's employee contracts are due for renegotiation and do not sign a contract with them if they are doing so during your meeting dates. Ask the CVB about local transit contracts and keep in touch with them right before your meeting to make sure there are no possibilities of strikes on the horizon.

Demonstrations: Learn what other events will be in the city when you are and if they may cause a potential disruption. Ask how they handle such situations. Alert attendees and offer solutions to avoid certain areas and traffic congestion. Alert hotel security of potential problems and partner with police for controlling demonstrations and protecting attendees and speakers. Tighten security to make sure only registrants attend your meeting sessions.

Bad Timing: Have you ever been in a city when the President is visiting? Talk about a disruption in traffic! Or parades or marathons that cut off certain routes. In Austin there seems to be a “run” every other weekend! Or your meeting is during a week of a citywide sporting event and rooms are going for rack and above? Publish an earlier cut-off date than you have contracted and inform attendee's of a potential sell-out situation to encourage early booking. Include a strong “walk” clause in your contract to ensure your attendees have rooms at the host hotel. Be sure to pre-block those VIP rooms.

Pandemic: Learn the facts about “bird” flu and get prepared by obtaining information from the American Red Cross, Centers for Disease Control and www.pandemicflu.gov. Stay tuned to news and media reports and follow updates by local public health authorities. Collect important contact information for people you may need to reach if unable to travel. Stay healthy by washing your hands, covering your cough, stay home when sick and help educate others.

No matter what situation arises one of the most important reactions to any emergency is to be calm and create a sense of normalcy. Keep your disaster team and your attendees informed so you can move forward with your plans to make the best out of every possible scenario.

One of the best sources for emergency preparedness and building your response plan is www.fema.gov. Their website lists information and plans for every emergency imaginable. So do the research, gather your information, assess the risks at all your meeting locations and put your Emergency Response plans in place NOW. You never know what is just about to happen! ★

CGMP RECERTIFICATION

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

WHETHER YOU ALREADY HAVE your CGMP certification or you're just considering taking the class and exam, it's important to be aware of the requirements for recertification. The good news is that you won't have to take another exam!

Certification is valid for three years, and you will receive a recertification notice about 60 days prior to the expiration date. The application for recertification must be submitted at least 30 days prior to expiration, so you should be compiling the data in advance.

In order to recertify, you must have continued membership in SGMP, and continue to have a paying job that includes responsibility for planning meetings.

In addition, you must earn a minimum of 50 points during the three-year period. Points will be based on the following activities:

- Planning conferences and meetings for 10+ attendees
- Attending formal training on government meeting planning
- Attending government and industry related meetings, workshops, or trade shows
- Attending at least five monthly chapter educational meetings each calendar year for a total of 15 meetings over three years (requires proof of attendance)

- Attending at least one annual SGMP National Education Conference (requires proof of attendance)
- Writing an article published in a chapter newsletter, *Advantage Magazine*, or other industry-related publication

You can earn bonus points for the following:

- Presenting or serving as a panel member at a local chapter educational meeting
- Presenting or serving as a panel member at a National Education Conference
- Serving on the Chapter or National Board of Directors
- Serving on a Chapter or National Committee
- Recruiting planner members

In order to meet the requirements, you will need to start planning for recertification as soon as you earn your CGMP credential. You can find the information on the National website: click on CGMP Certification, then Important Notices; at the bottom of the page, click to download the recertification form. I have set up a file using the form as a checklist, entering information as I complete activities, and including the documentation if needed. **You invest a great deal of time and energy in order to earn your CGMP credential, so don't risk letting it lapse by not planning ahead for recertification.** ★

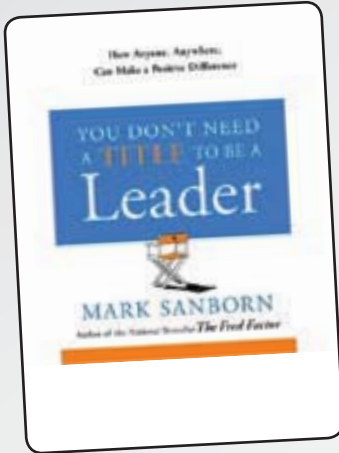
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DO YOU NEED A TITLE TO BE A LEADER?

Lydia Starry, CMP, Department of Veteran Affairs

IT SHOULD COME AS NO SURPRISE that you do not need a title to be a leader. Why is it not a surprise? It is because many of us, most of us, are leaders even if we do not realize it. And if you are surprised, stop and think carefully about it. We are leaders in some aspects of our lives. How do you show and use these leadership traits?



I recently read a book written by Mark Sanborn, “YOU DON’T NEED A TITLE TO BE A LEADER.” This is a great book to read. It is a short book that you can read one evening when you can find nothing decent to watch on TV. You can also take it on a plane and read in-flight or you can read it at the doctor’s office where you are made to wait forever and get bored or fidgety.

I want to share part of the book’s introduction:

How Do Leaders Act?

- Believe they can positively shape their lives and careers.
- Lead through their relationships with people, as opposed to their control over people.
- Collaborate rather than control.
- Persuade others to contribute, rather than order them to.
- Get others to follow them out of respect and commitment rather than fear and compliance.

Can you answer “yes” to any of the above statements of yourself? Remember it does not take an impressive title to prove you are a leader. After all, don’t we all know of management with great titles and weak leadership skills? And don’t we know co-workers that we emulate because they inspire us?

Do you want to take control of your life? Do you want to help others? Do you want to help this organization? I bet you answered “yes” to these three questions. You are leaders.

When I mention “ROI” what comes to mind? Not what you are thinking . . . I am referring to Relationships, Outcomes, and Improvements. I am going to share a story with you. During one of my conferences, one of the attendees had a horrendous experience with a Front Desk staff member of a local property. The Manager on Duty took no action to diffuse the situation. The attendee came to me and complained about the abysmal experience at this hotel. He was

ready to move to another hotel. I told him I would contact the Federal Sales Manager and see if he would help us address the problem. Before I could do that, I saw three gentlemen in nice suits being escorted to the Exhibit Hall where I was working at the time. One of the gentlemen was the Federal Sales Manager. This Sales Manager introduced the other two “suits” to me. These gentlemen were the Director of Sales and the General Manager. To put it mildly, I was shocked. The General Manager of this prestigious hotel was coming to apologize to our attendee? Yes, that is exactly what he did. He apologized profusely for the confusion and treatment. The attendee immediately accepted the apology and was even rewarded with an extremely generous offer for a future stay.

Now, think about this scenario? Was this General Manager a leader? No doubt about it. Did he contribute towards good publicity for his hotel? No doubt about it. I feel sure that because of this management leader, the attendee still stays at these hotels and has not forgotten the courtesies extended by this leader. It was definitely not forgotten as even I am still sharing the story with others.

Your relationships with others contribute to the outcomes that should be positive experiences that others would like to emulate or can lead to improvements that will foster improved relationships. You control your destiny. Be a leader at work, at home, and in your community.

If time permits, head to the library or bookstore and purchase and read this book. It is a truly inspiring book to read. ★



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Laredo offers almost 4,000 hotel rooms. In the heart of Laredo's historic district, the Spanish - colonial style La Posada Hotel / Suites is sporting a new look. The award winning 150-room Embassy Suites is located just across shopping at Mall del Norte. The 202-room Holiday Inn is walking distance from the Laredo Civic Center. New, all-suite hotel properties include the SpringHill Suites, Staybridge Suites, and Best Western.

The bureau provides a lead system where you can fill out our request for proposal at www.visitlaredo.com or e-mail or fax us your event details to initiate planning. You may fax your documents to (956) 795-2185, attention Ramon Hernandez, marketing manager or call the Laredo Convention & Visitors Bureau toll free at (800) 361-3360.

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PLANNER SPOTLIGHT: ANGELIA HENDERSON JOHNSON

Jim Deuser, McAllen CVB



Angelia Johnson has presence! One sees it and feels it upon entering her office. She looks “in charge.” A member of SGMP since October of 2007, Angelia also projects a warmth and grace that makes a visitor glad to have met her. Angelia is from Georgia and graduated from the University of West Georgia with a Bachelor

of Business Administration degree. Angelia has lived in Austin since 1984 with her husband, Michael, who accepted a position with IBM. She has been with the Texas Department of Insurance since that time. Angelia is currently Deputy Commissioner, Filings & Operations Division at the Texas Department of Insurance, a position in which she takes justifiable pride. “In 1993, I set myself a goal of becoming a Deputy Commissioner within five years. I did it in 5 1/2,” she noted.

Angelia’s husband is an electrical engineer. He is somewhat of an outdoorsman, like many in Austin, but what really sets him apart is his watch collection. Not only does he have a lot of watches, but he can take them apart and put them back together again! Angelia and her husband would like to travel more, but work keeps them pretty close to home. Baking, however, is a passion for Angelia and

her “million dollar pound cake” with a pound of butter and a pound of sugar is her favorite creation.

Angelia joined SGMP when her duties were expanded to include meeting planning. She was already planning the agency’s semi-annual compliance conferences. Then, upon the dissolution of the Texas Worker’s Compensation Commission, many new responsibilities to implement workers’ compensation healthcare networks for injured workers were transferred to her program, including the necessity for meetings throughout the state for outreach and education efforts. “Thank goodness for Kim Kizer and CVB’s,” she exclaimed. “The complexity of the bidding process and the execution of these workshops with as many as 150 attendees would have been overwhelming without Kim’s advice and the help of CVB’s.” In return, Angelia has become a member of Kim’s chapter education committee and is looking forward to making a contribution to this effort. Her list of community activities and recognition, which include the Dean’s list in college, participation in Leadership Austin and Leadership Texas, and service on several boards, indicates potential for significant contribution to SGMP as well. “My strength seems to lie in improving processes and developing programs,” says Angelia. “I usually find a niche that needs filling.” It seems apparent that SGMP is going to be good for Angelia, and Angelia is going to be good for SGMP. ★

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SUPPLIER SPOTLIGHT: JEANINE KASNIK

Karla Starkweather, Texas Health and Human Services Commission



JEANINE KASNIK represents the historic InterContinental Stephen F. Austin Hotel. She has been at the property for almost five years and is their senior sales manager. She proudly claims that her property is the best hotel in downtown Austin, offering state capitol views. "I love selling a hotel with history and

character," she said. "I like working with people and assisting them in ensuring that their meeting is a wonderful, successful experience." Jeanine still enjoys the 'thrill of the sale' and receiving a signed contract! She has booked business as a result of being an SGMP member so she can tell you all about return on investment (ROI).

Jeanine has been a member of SGMP since she started her position at the Stephen F. Austin Hotel. She enjoys the great educational and networking opportunities that SGMP offers. She particularly likes the monthly meetings at different venues and the opportunity to get to know planners and colleagues. The community involvement opportunities that SGMP offers are of special interest to Jeanine. "I think it is great that SGMP is interested in giving back to the community by orchestrating

volunteering opportunities," she said. Jeanine participates yearly in the Feast of Sharing event and has her family volunteering as well, to assist the chapter in their efforts.

Born in Chicago, Jeanine moved to the Florida Keys when she was in high school. Her first position in the hotel industry was at the Sheraton in Key Largo during the late 80s. She transitioned into sales after two years and also held a position at the Omni Colonnade. She moved to Austin seven years ago to the Omni Southpark as director of sales and marketing. "I sure did miss selling, as I am currently at the InterContinental Stephen F. Austin Hotel as the senior sales manager," she said.

Jeanine has been married for two years and has a stepdaughter. Her mother and sister lived in Austin, so she was happy to get a career opportunity here. She also likes to dabble in real estate, "As a child, I could beat just about everyone at Monopoly (even adults!) and now the joke is that I own a couple of houses and work at a hotel!" she said.

She also enjoys attending to her flowers and plants and walking and playing with her adopted pup, Mr. Wigglesworth. These activities are a joy to her and help with day to day stress. Be sure to say hello to Jeanine at the next chapter meeting. ★

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TECHNOLOGY — TODAY AND IN THE NOT SO DISTANT FUTURE

Darlene Morgan, Crowne Plaza Houston North

HOTELS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN KNOWN to provide an atmosphere where travelers and meeting planners can escape from ordinary life. Meeting planners select their sites by looking for a hotel that meets current trends and needs of their attendees.

Technology is of major importance to hotels in order for them to provide excellent service and a relaxed stay for travelers and attendees. The challenge is staying ahead of the curve at a time when it's difficult just to keep up. It's not easy for planners. It's difficult to project what new technology may emerge as the latest "must-have." Google is only seven years old. It's hard to imagine life before "instant search," accessing information at our fingertips, and communication at an instant reach of our cell phones.

Hoteliers are forced to keep up with current trends as fast as they can to ensure happy guests. Areas that are currently being introduced into newly built and remodeled meeting hotels include flat screens in all rooms with interactive gaming and music as well as rental movies, excellent wireless connectivity, connectivity in public spaces such as lounges and restaurants, furniture to make it comfortable and accessible, storage for laptops, meeting rooms that accommodate laptop usage, electronic charging stations in guest rooms, and excellent desk space. Trends in future years include interactive web sites, booking by "fingertip scanning," (RFID) Radio Frequency Identification, and Profile Anticipation.

Flat Screen Televisions, Desks with Chargers, Interactive Music, Gaming, and Movies

Walk into a modern guest room today and you'll most likely find it fully equipped with flat screen televisions with interactive music and gaming. In addition large desks with ergonomic chairs are being added with charger space and hook ups to allow overnight charging of all the guest's gadgets.

Complimentary Wireless Public Spaces

The current trend for hotels is to make their public spaces wireless compatible in order for guests to stay in touch during and after meetings, while having meals in the restaurant, or evening cocktails in the lounge. The Crowne Plaza Houston North, just completed a 15 million dollar renovation and introduced complimentary wireless internet in all public spaces (the guest rooms and meeting rooms still have a minimal charge). The public areas have comfortable and contemporary chairs with laptop trays attached.

Lap Top Storage Areas

Many upscale hotels now have laptop storage areas. The areas have vaults especially designed for laptops allowing travelers to secure their laptops and be free to go out for dinner without worrying about its security. They are equipped with electronic plugs to allow the laptops to charge overnight when not in use. Laptop storage and easy accessibility is also a nod towards going "green." Attendees can type notes into a laptop thus eliminating paper usage.

Nowadays it seems everyone must be accessible at all times. Response time for many companies on RFP's is two hours. Supervisors expect immediate response to questions and instant reports. Most upscale meeting facilities are taking the steps to ensure guests have instant connectivity.

Here are a few expected trends we can look forward to in the not so distant future:

- 1) According to Biometric Solutions "fingerprint scanning" could make travel of the future simpler. The fingertip is a unique identifier for the customer's profile and is currently being rolled out on modern PCs. "A customer would scan their fingertip on their computer and store personal booking information that they can retrieve at a travel kiosk, at the airport check-in desk, or hotel."
- 2) **Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)** — Mobile phones will be equipped with a bar code reader that enables customers to scan bar codes on advertisements on hotels and their availability. A booking confirmation would then have a unique barcode that the customer would scan to store it. While they travel the phone bar code would be used to identify them on the many steps of their travels from shops, hotels, and airports. Check in and check out procedures would be faster and at an instant reach. This form of cashless payment systems can be used on-property and off property as well. For example, at a theme park, RFID locator bracelets can be preloaded and used to pay for food and beverages. The RFID systems, developed by Guest Technologies, have yielded an almost immediate return on investment.
3. **Profile Anticipation** or no more "20 questions at check-in" is what the marketing agency Yesawich, Pepperdine, Brown, & Russell say to watch for. According to their article "Hotel 1000," some Seattle, Washington hotels have guests' favorite media and services located on widescreen plasma monitors located throughout its rooms and suites. Guests can control content, multi-area volume of the sound system, and interact with their profiles through these devices.

Hoteliers are seeing to it that guests' comfort levels are matched on an upscale basis as well as their technological needs. Clients not only expect comfort bedding, designer water, and excellent service, they expect instant connectivity. Hotels that move with technological trends and offer easy access to everything from clients' favorite food to their musical preferences will be ahead of the competition. There's no doubt that wireless connectivity and easy use of laptop computers in our busy world is a must. Get ready for a completely different experience at these "forward thinking" hotels — one in which technology anticipates your every need without having to ask. ★

Top Travel trends 2007 Hotel Marketing.com January 18, 2008; BioMetric Solutions.com; Marketing by Peter Yesawich; Microsoft.com.

A MASTER CLASS FOR MEETING & HOSPITALITY PROFESSIONALS

By Nancy Ruiz, UT Thompson Conference Center

JUDITH MILLER PRESENTED A WORKSHOP that was so information-packed that attempting to summarize it is like trying to summarize an encyclopedia.

Ms. Miller emphasized the importance of being aware of generational differences and being sensitive to these differences. She stated that these differences impact recruiting, retention, training, motivation, productivity, competitiveness, all forms of communication, every negotiation, and the entire planning process. According to Ms. Miller we now have four and a half generations in the workforce, including the Traditionalists, the Boomers, the Gen-Xers, and the Gen-Yers (or Millennials or Echo Generation). Gen-Yers are split into two groups — one from 1980-1983 to 1994 and 1995 to 2001). Respect for authority, loyalty to employers, affinity for working in teams or alone, use of electronic communications technology, and expectations for rewards/promotion vary widely among the generations.

Ms. Miller also talked about “brick walls” or obstacles in business. She states that “listening with intent” is the “ultimate weapon” against brick walls in negotiations and in business. Ms. Miller says listening with intent includes the following: keeping quiet, repeating salient points, maintaining eye contact/leaning in slightly, summarizing the facts without blame, acknowledging opinions, keeping the end game in view, and not interrupting. She also recommends reframing issues. For example, don’t give an accusatory response to someone who has behaved in an inappropriate way, but rather, express your disappointment in the behavior.

In the same vein, Ms. Miller talked about rebuilding bridges. She suggested avoidance of attacking, accusing, stereotyping, and



antagonizing behaviors and promoted giving second chances, empathizing, and compromising. She recommended acknowledging different communication styles and apologizing when you are wrong.

Other areas covered by Ms. Miller include “redundancy” when planning (plan it three times, check, recheck, and put it in writing), an increasing emphasis on electronic communications and virtual meetings except when security or sensitive issues are involved, and more numerous and more costly surcharges and fees charged by various suppliers due to increasing oil costs. Ms. Miller covered negotiating strategies in some detail. She also discussed the reassignment of procurement duties to planners due to budget cuts and streamlining of organizations and how planners and procurement managers tend to have different philosophies and priorities. For more information on this session, please contact Nancy Ruiz at nruiz@mail.utexas.edu.

This article is a synopsis of the workshop presented by Judith Miller, Founder & CEO of The Judith Miller Group, at the 2008 SGMP National Education Conference in June. ★



2ND QUARTER RAFFLE DONORS

A special thank you to our raffle donors. Their donations allow us to raise money for our scholarship fund. These scholarships are awarded to active chapter members who wish to attend the National Education Conference or the Regional Conference.

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SGMP GOLFERS CELEBRATE THE GILMER GOLF CLASSIC

Jim Deuser, McAllen CVB and Grace Nied, CGMP, Governor's Center for Management Development

SATURDAY, JUNE 14TH, saw 20 SGMP golfers enjoy a beautiful day and a beautiful classic, tree lined, golf course following the Annual Education Conference in Dallas.

The proceeds from the tournament will benefit the SGMP Gilmer Institute of Learning Educational Scholarship Fund. Kelly Roche, CGMP, of the Irving Texas, CVB, a Gilmer Institute trustee, and our own chapter member Stacy Janecka, CMP, coordinated the event, which featured lots of free golf balls and gift certificates for the runners up. The members of the winning team, Michael DeJesus of Pacifica Hotels, Jason Turnbull of Dallas Business Journal, Stacy Janecka, CMP, of the Office of Attorney General, and Vince Bogard, CMP of Westin Park Central each were presented with handsome trophies at the awards reception following the golf. Each golfer also received a "goody bag" with really nice goodies.

This first annual Gilmer Golf classic is named, of course, for the founder of SGMP, Sam Gilmer. The nine trustees of the Gilmer Institute of Learning were present at the tournament, stuffing goody bags, meeting and greeting participants, and making sure we all had a great time. The Institute was only recently created by a new bylaw voted and approved by the membership of SGMP. The Institute, through the work of the trustees, is charged with making a difference in the quality of educational opportunities available to SGMP members. ★

DON'T MISS ANOTHER GREAT NETWORKING OPPORTUNITY

Karla Starkweather, Texas Health and Human Services Commission

SUSAN GREENBERG, CMP, CASE, has brought back Chat and Chow. Long-time members may remember that in the past, we had an informal, networking lunch. Twelve members attended Chat and Chow at Texas Land and Cattle Steak House on April 24. Those attending were: Ed Howard – Hilton Austin Airport, Jaime Yount – DoubleTree Hotel Austin, Monica Rivera Guerra – General Land Office, Jeffery Bell – Arlington CVB, Margaret Maggio – Horizons Meetings & Events, Susan Greenberg, CMP, CASE – Embassy Suites Hotel-Austin North, Rhonda Durst – General Land Office, Jim Zukowski – Contract Planner, Karla Starkweather – HHSC, Grace Nied, CGMP – Governor's Center for Management Development, Jean Bonner, Texas Justice Court Training Center, and Heather Hidalgo, CMP, Texas Justice Court Training Center.

Susan is planning this as a quarterly event and encourages members who are unable to attend our evening meetings to try to make it to lunch. The next Chat and Chow will be on July 31 at Texas Land and Cattle Steak House. The restaurant offers ample free parking and separate checks for each guest. ★

TORTILLA SOUP

Submitted by: Executive Chef Dan Meath, Doubletree Hotel Austin

4 poblano peppers
4 yellow onions
3 Tbsp garlic
2 Tbsp ground cumin-dried
2 Tbsp whole oregano-dried
1 Gallon diced tomato
1 Can V-8
½ Gallon water
4 Ounces chicken soup base



Roast poblano peppers until skin is charred; remove skin and seeds; dice in large pieces. Remove husks from yellow onions; cut in half and slice in julienne strips.

Sauté peppers, onions, and garlic in olive oil until the onions are translucent. Add the dried spices; sauté until incorporated. Add remaining ingredients; bring to a boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Adjust flavor with salt and white pepper.

Garnish with grated jack cheese and fried tri-color tortilla strips. Yields 2 gallons.

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3000 NASA Parkway, Houston

September 11, 2008, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

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Presented by Joyce Sparks, CMP

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October 9, 2008, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

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Doubletree Hotel, Austin
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November 13, 2008, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Dream Meetings (also Supplier Appreciation Night)
Hyatt Regency Austin
208 Barton Springs, Austin

December 4, 2008, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Holiday Party with Live & Silent Auctions and Awards Ceremony
Renaissance Austin Hotel
9721 Aboretum Blvd., Austin

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SGMP Mission Statement

To improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of government meetings through education, networking, and professional development.

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