



Lone Star News

Vol. XV, No. 2

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

2nd Quarter 2007

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

www.sgmpaustin.org

A Crowning Glory for SGMP

by Marta C. Gutierrez, Texas Health and Human Services Commission

A silver anniversary was celebrated this year and what a spectacular celebration! SGMP celebrated its silver anniversary—that’s right folks, 25 years of existence of an organization for government meeting professionals. Now that’s a success story! *The Crowning Touch of Education*



National Board Members Donna Cottle, CMP, CHSC, and Kristi Griffith, CHSP, CGMP, prior to the banquet.

was this year’s theme at the national educational conference and was held “at the home” of the Miss America Pageant, Atlantic City, NJ, at the Atlantic City Convention Center. This year, two host hotels were used—the Sheraton Atlantic City Convention Center Hotel and the Tropicana Casino and Resort. Once again, old friends visited and new friendships were made, and for many, viewing a slide show of the past conferences during the 25 years, was surely a sentimental and fun journey. We all looked—so different!

Every year, SGMP adopts a Community Project and this year was no exception. The ARC of Atlantic County was our project for this year, raising financial support for the non-profit organization which helps to make a difference in improving the lives of people with developmental disabilities. NATCAP hosted a raffle table to help with the fundraising support.

The chapter had three people in the CMP study group this year: Rob Casias, Bob Nichols and Joyce Sparks. Also, congratulations to Kristi Griffith, CHSP, who is now also a CGMP after taking the study course and exam at the conference. And Donna Cottle, CMP,

earned her CHSC certification.

(continued on page 7)

New Chapter Leadership

by Heather Hidalgo, CMP, Texas Justice Court Training Center

The votes have been tallied and your new Board of Directors takes office after their installation on June 14th during the chapter meeting held at Green Pastures. Heading the team is **President Jim Zukowski**. Jim has been an active member of SGMP for many years and I am sure he will be an outstanding leader for our chapter. The **First Vice President** is **Linda Villarreal-Jackson**, CGMP, with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission. Linda

brings her many years of experience on the Board. The **Second Vice President** is **Ed Howard** of the Hilton Austin Airport Hotel who will be representing our suppliers on the National Suppliers Leadership Roundtable. **Donna Cottle, CMP**, with The Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau will be taking on the **Treasurer’s** duties, also bringing her past experience on our Board as well as the National Board.

(continued on page 9)

Inside this issue . . .

Cover Story

A Crowning Glory for SGMP..... 1

New Chapter Leadership 1

Leadership & Chapter News

A Word from our President2

Board Buzz2

Financial Report2

Incoming President’s Message3

Membership Update3-4

Thanks to Raffle Donors.....4

Monthly Meeting Recaps.....5-6

Community Involvement.....6

Personal Development

Enriching Your Personal Skills8

Meeting Planning

Disaster Planning.....9

CGMP

Paying It Forward-CGMP Style9

Member Spotlights10-11

Meeting Industry News

How to Save on Your F&B Costs.12

Professional Development

Joy on the Job 13

Techno News

Creating Powerful Presentations... 14

Look What’s Ahead 14

Mark Your Calendar 16



A Word From Our President

by Karla Starkweather, Texas Health & Human Services Commission

As I write my last president's column for the newsletter, I reflect on the last two years. It has been a rewarding and challenging time. I'd like to thank a few individuals who were always there for me,

taking on special assignments and making my life a little easier: Marta Gutierrez with the Health and Human Services Commission, Bob Nichols with the Governor's Center for Management Development, Janet Spies with the Comptroller of Public Accounts, Nancy Van Bramer with the Renaissance Hotel, Murray Moore with the Texas Education Agency and Lanna Johnson, Department of State Health Services.

Also, a sincere thank you to all the board members who worked so hard for our chapter: Jim Zukowski, First Vice President, Susie Ashcraft, Second Vice President, Jaime Yount, Treasurer, Lydia Starry, CMP, Secretary, directors Linda Jackson, CGMP, Connie Ramos and Kathy Casarez, and Immediate Past President Grace Nied, CGMP.

The Atlantic City conference was well attended with approximately 900 attendees. About 28 members from our chapter attended and it was exciting to learn that we won third place in the program of the year competition for our SGMP Mystery Theater program.

Chapter Presidents Roundtable/Supplier Leadership Roundtable As we move to the regional model of SGMP, our regional representative for the chapter presidents will be Teresa Nelson of the North Texas Chapter with our incoming president Jim Zukowski as backup in case she is unable to attend a meeting. Our region's supplier leadership representative will be Gia Joko from the Rocky Mountain Chapter for half the year and then Lynn Armstrong from the North Texas Chapter for the second half. All chapter presidents and supplier leadership representatives will continue to meet during the national conference.

As our new board takes office, please be sure to give them your support as you have over the last two years. It's been great.

Board Buzz

by Lydia Starry, CMP, Department of Veterans Affairs

This past quarter the Board was extremely busy ensuring our submissions for the National Conference in Atlantic City were in place. It was well worth the effort as our chapter was recognized with third place for our SGMP Mystery Theater chapter meeting that was organized by Grace Nied, CGMP.

We are also currently planning our annual chapter retreat. This year it will take place in August at the Holiday Inn Emerald Beach in Corpus Christi. We are thrilled to have Kacie Sicilia, CHSP, support us with our retreat and look forward to re-visiting her property. We must also thank Linda Jackson, CGMP, one of our Directors, for all her hard work planning this retreat. She has become our chapter "go-to" person for planning our special meetings and retreats.

Connie Ramos and Susie Ashcraft are also busy planning our July chapter silent auction. Please be supportive of their hard efforts as the money raised is used to help provide scholarships to our members for their continuing education at our Regional and National conferences.

It has been a very busy couple of years and my time on the chapter board is now at an end. I found serving on the Board to be not only a great opportunity to give back to SGMP for all the training and enrichment it has provided me, but also to see for myself all the hard work, dedication, and leadership it takes to be one of the few privileged to serve as a Board member.

My role in the chapter will be a bit different in the upcoming future, but I will continue to support SGMP as much as I possibly can. My advice to you? If you are not already active, become active. You must become a voice that can be heard. Without your input, what good is the chapter? It is our chapter and we must continue to make it the best "Darn Old Chapter"!!!

Financial Report

November 2006—January 2007

By Jaime Yount, Doubletree Hotel Austin

Income

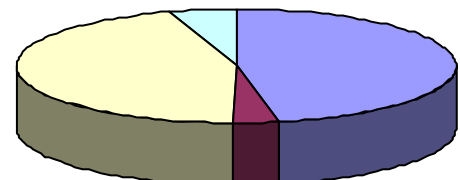
Revenue Share	\$ 2,903
Monthly Dues	1,490
Raffles	657
National Charity	58
Golf Registration	657
Newsletter Sponsorship	600
Total Income	\$ 7,205

Expenditures

\$ 19,962

Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter Membership—June 2007

■ Planners ■ Contract Planners □ Suppliers □ Retired



SGMP Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter

Board Members

President

Karla Starkweather (512) 424-6927

First Vice President

Jim Zukowski (512) 797-2240

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) 797-2240

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.

Circulation: 250

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Incoming President's Message

by Jim Zukowski

Thank you for allowing me to serve as President of the Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter for the next two years. You have elected a fantastic board of directors. These individuals bring a wealth of experience and ideas that promise to make our chapter more productive and more visible.

As I mentioned in my campaign speech earlier this year, the board's role is to serve you. I take great pride in believing that the consensus approach is the most viable way for us to handle the multitude of requirements and activities that are a part of our chapter. Your involvement is the key to making this concept work for all of us. I'm pledging to all of you that each and every one of you will somehow get more involved in this chapter. Whether it be serving on a committee, task force, or just more involvement and participation in our educational offerings, you will be committed to the progress of this chapter.

Public relations is also essential in making this chapter a success. We need to let our colleagues and the community understand how important SGMP is to the success of state government. The partnerships that we develop between government planners and suppliers create friendships that affect the way we conduct our business. It ultimately affects the welfare of the state of Texas.

Please join me in the challenges ahead and the new frontiers that we'll be exploring. The future promises to be an exciting one!

Membership Update

By Linda Jackson, CGMP, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Membership Chair for the last four years. Thank you so much to the entire Membership Committee – I definitely couldn't have done this without all of their hard work. I leave you in good hands with Ed Howard, Hilton Austin Airport. Please welcome Ed to the Board and the new Chair of the Membership Committee.

We are up 10 members from last quarter! The chapter has 185 members and our ratio is 52.8% Planners and 47.2% Suppliers. We have 87 Government Planners; 6 Contract Planners; 83 Suppliers; 0 Associate Planners; and 9 Retired/Student members.

Kudos to Bob Nichols and his committee. They have been busy sending out e-mail reminders for renewals – which help us maintain our ratio. Their hard work paid off in April. It's the heaviest month for renewals and we only had two members who didn't renew their membership.

Welcome our newest members...

Planners

Laine "Copie" Hotman, Texas Department of Family & Protective Services★
 Angelia Johnson, Texas Department of Insurance★Jean C. Johnson, UT Austin –
 College of Liberal Arts★Tracy Limon, Texas Department of Information Resources★
 Judy A. Mintier, Texas Department of State Health Services★Lori Rhodes, Keena and Company

Suppliers

Sue Baker, Wyndham Garden Austin★Vicki T. Goldman, Advantage Rent-A-Car
 ★Terry Hix (new contact), St. Anthony's Wyndham Hotel★Dana Smith (new
 contact), El Paso CVB★Tina Teague (new contact), Amarillo CVB

Chapter News



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Membership Update (continued)

It Pays to Renew on Time!

The Chapter is always looking at ways that we can 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. **Congratulations to those who have received their certificates. Enjoy your free meeting!**

Thanks for Renewing Your Membership

Gina Garcia, Office of Rural Community Affairs★**Monica Guerra**, Texas General Land Office★**Sly Guzman**, Youth Advocate Programs★**Carrie Harper**, Texas Municipal Courts Education Center★**Linda Jackson, CGMP**, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission.★**Stacy Janecka, CMP**, Office of the Attorney General★**Michelle Leija**, University of Texas★**Diane Cayce**, Fort Worth CVB★**Barbara Glaser Fryer**, AVW-TELAV Audio Visual Solutions ★**Melissa Janda**, Omni San Antonio Hotel★**Patty Kerr-Rouse**, Hotel Galvez★**Kacie Sicilia, CHSP**, Holiday Inn Emerald Beach Corpus Christi★**Dana Smith**, El Paso CVB★**Tawana Thomas**, Wichita Falls CVB★**Nancy Yawn**, Round Rock CVB★**Keena Collins, CMP, CGMP**, Keena and Company★**Cobé Dunn**, Texas Department of Information Resources★**Kimira Hysaw**, State Bar of Texas★**Laurie Lowman**, Calhoun County Community Network★**Keri Mueller, CMP**, Texas Justice Court Training Center★**Bob Nichols**, Governor's Center for Management Development★**Dottie Bossley**, Galveston Island CVB★**Connie Fisher**, Holiday Inn Town Lake★**Leanne Hallisey**, Omni Hotels of Texas★**Brenda Rodriguez**, Holiday Inn Riverwalk★**Carissa Smith**, Omni Austin Hotel Downtown★**Shay Stavenhagen**, Arlington CVB★**Linda Wade, CEM**, Convention Decorating Services, Inc.

Thanks to our Raffle Donors: April-June

by *Connie Ramos, Homewood Suites Austin South*

Susie Ashcraft-Radisson South Padre Island Resort, Donna Cottle-Austin CVB, Connie Fisher-Holiday Inn Town Lake, Rose Irizarry, Stacy Janecka, Bob Nichols, Stephanie Nichols-La Quinta, Nancy Ruiz, Tammy Srubar-Greater Houston CVB Nancy Van Bramer-Renaissance Austin Hotel, Jaime Yount, Doubletree Austin Hotel, Stacy Janecka, Andy Peaslee-Bryan College Station CVB; Kristi Griffith-PHM Hospitality, Karla Starkweather, Melissa Janda-Omni San Antonio Hotel, Ramon Hernandez-Laredo CVB, Jason Sechrest-Keena & Co., Erin Finney-Radisson Town Lake, Bob Nichols, Sandi Lane-Waco CVB, Wilma Harvey-Corpus Christi CVB, Donna Cottle-Austin CVB, Pene Bridges-Tyler CVB, Deidra Davidson-Dispute Resolution Center, Nancy Gil-Holiday Inns of Lubbock, Ed Howard-Hilton Airport, Jyll Vertuno, Bri Edwards-Marriott South, Bruce Wolpert-Adams Mark Dallas, Connie Reineke-Hilton Waco, Janet Spies.

April Meeting: Making Lasting Impressions First Impressions

by Jim Zukowski

Colleen Rickenbacher, CMP, was our featured speaker at the April 12, 2007, education meeting of the Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter held at the Renaissance Austin Hotel. Sixty attendees were provided delicious food and beverages by our host, Nancy Van Bramer. The meeting was held in the beautiful Wedgewood Room of the hotel; a perfect setting for the meeting.



Colleen Rickenbacher, CMP, demonstrates a proper handshake with Kim Kizer.

Ms. Rickenbacher is a world-renowned and highly-revered speaker, author and business etiquette expert who combined her vast hospitality industry experience into a highly entertaining and interactive discussion of business etiquette topics essential to the meeting planner. Her presentation centered on how we should look, act and eat while on the job. With much enthusiasm and humor, she discussed the right way to conduct business, proper follow-up procedures, perception and how it factors into business decisions and the art of selling your "brand."

Most of the audience was amazed at how some of the business etiquette rules have changed, specifically on the proper way to shake hands, simple introductions and wardrobe considerations. Ms. Rickenbacher provided several copies of her book, *Be On Your Best Business Behavior*, for raffle prizes. All in all, the presentation was fun and extremely useful. Thanks to Nancy Van Bramer for hosting a wonderful evening!

May Meeting: Meeting Monopoly

by Jim Deuser, McAllen Convention & Visitors Bureau

On Thursday evening, May 10, more than fifty members of SGMP all "passed GO and collected \$200" at the Omni Austin Hotel Southpark. The theme was "Monopoly" and the meeting room was decorated to reflect the theme of the evening. Posters announcing "The Electric Co," "Reading Railroad," "Community Chest," "Luxury Tax" and "Chance" decorated the walls. The tables were covered with monopoly money and deeds to "Park Place," "Marvin Gardens," "Illinois Ave" and more. Even the waiters got in the act. There was a railroad engineer, a monopoly character (who inherited complete with top hat and tails), and a convict (who obviously drew a "go to jail" card) to complete the scene.



Annemarie Retzliff rolls the dice hoping to get a land on a good space.

At 6:00 p.m. sharp, Karla and Heather started the program and we all played "SGMP Hospitality Monopoly." Every table, six to a table, was a team, each with their own token. Representatives from each team rolled the dice and



Omni staff went all out decorating for the meeting.

moved their tokens around the table. Many of the spaces around the board required the team member to answer a question, read by Karla, about terminology used in the hospitality industry. Correct answers resulted in money collected for the team, the opportunity to buy property, or other monopoly-style benefits. Wrong answers cost the team. There were six rounds played so that every person attending got their opportunity to shine. At the end of the hour, everybody attending knew a great deal more about how to speak the hospitality industry language.

Thanks to meeting facilitators Karla Starkweather, Health and Human Services Commission and Chapter President and Heather Hidalgo, CMP, Texas Justice Court Training Center. A special thank you must go to Brent Boepple, Group Sales Manager, Omni Austin Hotel Southpark, who arranged for all this. Oh, and the food! The buffet was beyond wonderful and the service impeccable.

Chapter News

Potential Flooding Delays Clean Sweep

by Lanna Johnson, Department of State Health Services

Austin was deluged by heavy rainfall, so to protect volunteers working near creeks and other water bodies, the “Keep Austin Beautiful” Clean Sweep clean-up day was re-scheduled to April 21. The chapter’s volunteers this year included Nancy Van Bramer, Renaissance Austin Hotel and her daughter Catherine; Jim Zukowski and me, Lanna Johnson, Department of State Health Services. We worked a couple of hours early Saturday morning picking up litter from the playground and trails of the Balcones Woods District Park in Northwest Austin. In fact, more than 10,000 Austinites volunteer their time each year, committing 35,000 hours to projects involving the clean up and beautification of public spaces such as parks, streets and neighborhoods.



Jim Zukowski, Nancy & Catherine Van Bramer and Lanna Johnson

On Saturday, June 23, fourteen chapter volunteers worked at the Capital Area Food Bank from 12:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Karla Starkweather,

Health and Human Services Commission; Nancy Ruiz, University of Texas at Austin, Thompson Conference Center and her husband Patrick Bodin; their friend Judy Barrish and sons David and Daniel; Kim Kizer and her daughter Shelby and friend Megan; Fanny Flores, Wyndham Garden Hotel, and husband Alfred Bedolla and co-worker Bruse Miller, Wyndham Garden Hotel; Connie Fisher, Holiday Inn Austin Town Lake; and myself, Lanna Johnson, Department of State Health Services volunteered our time and effort to make a difference in our community.

One team inspected salvaged food items donated by HEB and then wiped down the outside of packages and cans of beans and tomatoes, bottled water, soda, fruit juice, olives and more olives (you had to be there) etc., with a light bleach solution for disinfection. The



food was sent down a conveyor belt where additional volunteers sorted them into boxes for weighing and labeling to be delivered to the local providers who distribute to those in need. The second team sorted non-food items, since safety rules prohibit minor children from working the conveyor belt side of the area.

Xavier, who we’ve worked with numerous times before, gave us instructions and provided a certificate showing how many pounds of food and non-food products we had readied for distribution. We processed 5,860 pounds of food which equals 4,688 meals and 1,800 pounds of non-food grocery products. Quite a lot, considering our work-day was just a little over three hours long.

It is satisfying to know our efforts make a difference and our Community Involvement Committee chooses activities that improve the lives of our fellow Austinites.

This is my last activity as Chair of the Community Involvement Committee. I have enjoyed coordinating and working on the community activities and charities and hope the next chairperson has as rewarding an experience leading our chapter’s efforts to give back to our community.

Thank you all for your generosity.

June Meeting: The Art of Communication

by Karla Starkweather, Texas Health and Human Services Commission



Connie Fisher thanks our speaker, Anne Pritchard.

The lovely Green Pastures Restaurant was the venue for our meeting on June 14, 2007. The Waco Convention and Visitors Bureau was our host and the food selection was fabulous. Sandi Lane and Carla Pendergraft, CMP did a super job planning the event.

We were pleased to have Tom Hirano, chapter president of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter, in attendance. He installed our incoming board for the 2007-2009 term.

Our speaker for the evening was Anne Pritchard of Strategic Solutions Group. Her session on the Art of Communication taught us to identify the different behavior styles and how to recognize our style and the styles of others. While being entertained, we learned how to modify our behavior to communicate with others more effectively. If you would like an electronic copy of her presentation, please e-mail karla.starkweather@hsc.state.tx.us.

A big thanks to the Waco CVB, Tom Hirano and Anne Pritchard for making this meeting a big success.

A Crowning Glory for SGMP (cont'd from page 1)

Our kickoff event (Wednesday, May 2) opened with fanfare as attendees made their way to the famous Boardwalk and lined up to watch the *Shoe Parade*. The chapter presidents rode in the “rolling chairs” with their feet in the air and attendees cheered and roared with approval of the much-decorated shoes each chapter president displayed on their feet. Despite the very firm and cold winds, not one toe was lost to frostbite! So many shoes to judge but a winner was found. The winning shoe went to the NATCAP Chapter. After the parade, we were escorted by a high school band to a warm convention center where the opening reception got underway. Our music entertainment was provided by Kathy Sledge of the famed Sister Sledge group. What a great performance and the food at the reception was simply fabulous.



Our chapter's parade entry.



The opening keynote address (Thursday, May 3) was presented by former Miss America Heather Whitestone-McCallum (1995). *Success Through Action and Realization of your Dreams* was Heather's inspiring story about reaching your dreams even through obstacles by keeping a positive attitude, having a goal, a willingness to work hard and believe in your dream. Afterwards, we were ready to attend our first sessions—but not before a few of us got to feel that jeweled crown! The luncheon keynote speaker, Captain Gerald Coffee (Retired Navy), spoke on his presentation, *Beyond Survival*, and shared his life of seven years as a POW during the Vietnam War. His message was about how we each can go beyond survival and emerge as an even more capable individual. He spoke about the need for teamwork and support from each other. We went into our next set of sessions feeling more empowered. The evening time took us to the Supplier Night appreciation and networking events.

The educational sessions throughout the conference were outstanding. You will be able to read more about them in this and future issues of the newsletter.

On Friday (May 4) after a morning of educational sessions, we attended the Exhibition and Luncheon activities. This is the time when Suppliers get to shine and network on a national level with government planners they do not normally get to visit as frequently. These members provide so much for our organization at a national and local level and SGMP could not exist as we know it today. Planners, let's not forget to thank our suppliers whenever the opportunity arises.



Mary Croughin (North Texas Chapter) and Stacy Janecka, CMP, hooked up with singer Frankie Valli after the banquet Saturday night at Harrah's Casino.

Then came the time when we all so elegantly shined at the evening's Sam Gilmer Award Banquet. Ladies and Gents were in their finest clothes enjoying the dinner and camaraderie. And the final moment came when awards were being bestowed. The chapter participated in the newsletter and program competitions and we brought home 3rd



Marta Gutierrez wearing the crown and posing with Miss America, Heather Whitestone-McCallum.

place in program of the year. Hard work pays off! Pat these great committee members on the back for making our chapter shine.

The next morning (Saturday, May 5) brought us back to more sessions a little sleepy-eyed after a long evening, but we all made it through. The Chapter Operations workshop provided great hints for members to take back to their chapters on newsletter, fundraising, membership and websites. If you were feeling sluggish at all, our closing keynote speaker brought you back to life! John Alston, *Stuff Happens* (and then you fix it!), had a very motivating presentation during our brunch. John spoke about getting out of mediocrity and illustrated with skills and tools how to empower ourselves in our daily lives. He made us question our ideas and thoughts and feelings for a self checklist.

WOW! Three great speakers motivated us to move forward along with the great educational sessions. We all left this conference with the crown on our heads, reminding ourselves that WE CAN DO IT! Next year's conference will be just as incredible in Dallas, Texas.

Personal Development

Enriching Your Personal Skills

By Lydia Starry, CMP, Department of Veterans Affairs

Can never attend too many personal enrichment classes, correct? We are always learning and striving to expand our ability to deal with our peers, customers and bosses. I attended the SGMP National Conference and had the pleasure of attending a session called “**Strengthening Your People Skills in the Workplace.**” I saw the title of the course and thought it would be worthwhile. The presenter was Ms. Rebecca Pace. Ms. Pace is the founder of Pace Communications and is a member of the Rockhurst University Continuing Education Center.

One of the first things I found extremely interesting in Ms. Pace’s presentation is why messages and behaviors are misinterpreted. Have you ever had a conversation with someone where you feel you have expressed yourself succinctly, but they look at you like ‘what the heck are you saying?’ That is because communication is more than just words. Only 7 percent of the message is verbal. The majority, 93 percent, of the message is non-verbal. Additionally, we all express ourselves in different ways. We have four different personality types:



National Conference speaker Rebecca Pace.

Socializer, Relator, Director and Thinker. And what are the different characteristics?

Socializer: Fun, Festive, Creative, Challenging, Elaborate, Direct, Craves Recognition.

Relator: Kind, Compassionate, Helpful, Equal, Caring, Sensitive and Polite, Politically Correct; Craves Peace and Harmony.

Director: Fast, Allied to Bottom Line, Confident, Direct, Loud, Blunt, Craves Control and Completion.

Thinker: Facts, Data, Details, Numbers, Conservative, Craves Accuracy, Reserved.

When a Socializer speaks to a Director, can you see where their thought processes might be very different? They will never be the same and that is why as long as we are aware of the differences we can work on doing a better job of communicating. A Socializer needs to try to think more like a Thinker and express themselves that way. It is great insight not only for work, but also for your personal friends and family communications.

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Disaster Planning in Your Contracts

By Bob Nichols, Governor's Center for Management Development

We are seeing professionals in the meeting planning industry, whether hotelier or planner, encountering many challenges when developing successful contracts. In the past, minimal amounts of time were needed to create contracts. This is no longer the case and our thought processes must change. We are provided with many resources offering guides and/or recommendations for information to be included within any contract. Terms to look for in any contract are Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), Certificate of Insurance, Force Majeure (Acts of God), General Liability Insurance, Hold Harmless, Indemnification Clause, Liability and Waiver of Subrogation, for example. The provider and planner work to limit their liability in creation of the cancellation clause. In a recent issue of **MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS M&C**, addendums were addressed. The hotel industry has been working to standardize their contract process to reduce the time for processing booking requests. They are now being presented with an addendum from corporations, government agencies, or higher education institutions that are also making efforts to standardize how meetings are purchased. To that extent, they have come up with their own contracts to be used when booking meetings. Hotel salespeople and planners are left to reconcile the two, usually with their respective legal teams.

In addition to considering these normal challenges in contract negotiations, we must also consider new probabilities when preparing contracts. Events that were not foreseeable in the past now must be a conscious part of our negotiations. Terrorists' strikes on the World Trade Center in New York City, the Pentagon in Virginia, SARS in Toronto, effects of epidemics or pan-

demics and strikes are now foreseeable events that can affect planning meetings. Each of these events had potential negative impacts on the transportation and meeting industries.

When developing meeting event contracts, we should ensure that all parties know and have the same understanding of the following terms:

- Impossibility of Performance
- Impracticability of Performance
- Frustration of Purpose Doctrine
- Adequate Assurances of Performance
- Cancellation vs. Termination
- Excuse of Performance
- Controlling the realities and legalities after a disaster

With the new probabilities that can affect any event, we must ensure that Force Majeure, for example, is adequately defined. Force Majeure is defined as impossibility for one group to perform; however suppliers and planners look at this differently. The hotel may look at this as a total impossibility to hold the event, where the planner sees this as making it more difficult for the attendees.

When there are concerns about specific contingencies because of current events put them in the contract. Preparing contracts for disasters is possible by keeping abreast of events that may impact meetings and straightforward communication between supplier and planner.

Based on a workshop by John S. Foster, Esq. CHME, "Preparing Your Contracts for A Disaster" conducted at the SGMP 2007 National Conference.

Paying It Forward-CGMP Style

By Grace Nied, CGMP, Governor's Ctr for Management Dev.

I've found that networking, relationships and support of our colleagues are a big part of professionalism. My CGMP class in Denver in June 2006, was the first one conducted in conjunction with the National Conference and we experienced that professional camaraderie. While still in Denver, we decided that we wanted to do something for the next class to be held during the conference in Atlantic City. We kept in touch via email and tossed a number of ideas around, most of which would have cost too much.

Someone suggested putting together "survival kits" for the new group – some things to help them as they participated in the class and studied for the exam. One of our classmates volunteered to put the kits together and we all pitched in to cover the cost. The response from this year's class was amazing! They were so appreciative (all passed the exam by the way) and they've already decided to do the same for the class at the Dallas conference in 2008. That's what "pay it forward" is all about – doing things to help others with no expectation of something in return. The recipients then do good deeds for others. I see similar actions frequently in SGMP – suppliers who send business to other suppliers, planners who help other planners by sharing resources or members participating in community volunteer projects. What have you done lately to "pay it forward?"

New Chapter Leadership (cont'd from page 1)

We are very pleased to have some newcomers to the Board, **Rob Casias, Secretary**, with the National Guard Association of Texas; and **Directors Kathy Casarez** with the State Bar of Texas; **Kim Kizer** with the Secretary of State; and **Linda Wade, CEM**, with Convention Decorating Service, Inc. **Karla Starkweather** with Texas Health & Human Services Commission is the **Immediate Past President**. Thank you all for stepping up to the plate and taking on this extremely important task of leading our chapter for the next two years.

And let's not forget the outgoing Board who have been working diligently on your behalf for the past two years. Thank you for all your hard work and dedication – **President Karla Starkweather**; **1st Vice President – Jim Zukowski** who stepped in after **Eric Brown** left his position; **2nd Vice President – Susie Ashcraft**; **Treasurer – Jaime Yount**; **Secretary – Lydia Starry, CMP**; and **Directors Kathy Casarez** who stepped in after **Lili Larson** left SGMP; **Connie Ramos** and **Linda Villarreal-Jackson, CGMP**; **Immediate Past President Grace Nied, CGMP**.

Member Spotlight

Planner Spotlight: Kathy Casarez

by Jim Deuser, McAllen Convention and Visitors Bureau



It was great fun to interview Kathy over lunch at a terrific Austin eatery, Dan McKlusky's. The food was fabulous and the interview even better. Talking to Kathy is like opening Christmas presents. You pretty much know what you are going to get, but it's interesting and exciting and you still get a few surprises. On the day we met, Kathy was totally immersed in preparation for the State Bar of Texas annual conference. However, she took time

out to talk to me.

Kathy began her business career in banking and for eight years assembled foreign currency and sold it to the Federal Reserve Bank daily. Caught in the "bank merger crunch" of the late eighties and early nineties, she found herself looking for other interesting employment and found it with the State Bar of Texas. Kathy has been with the State Bar for 17 years. She now serves 44 "sections" of lawyers and plans their meetings and workshops throughout the state. A "section" is a group of lawyers who share a common interest and specialty in the law. One

training meeting or conference might be devoted to Social Security law, while another might have to do with real estate. These meetings are conducted by volunteers among the law fraternity and enable the members of the state bar to stay current in whatever specialties they choose.

Kathy has three children, all "almost grown." Her youngest just graduated from high school. Her husband works for the Texas Department of Transportation. They live in Pflugerville. Kathy's family has always been committed to community and Church. She is a member of St. Elizabeth's Parish and notes that spirituality and commitment to her faith are key components of her life.

Kathy has been a member of SGMP for thirteen years. She is currently completing service on the board, filling an unexpired term. She was just elected to her own term and installed at the Chapter meeting held at the Green Pastures restaurant in Austin on June 13. Kathy's goals for her next term involve service to membership and community involvement. "If you can't come to us, then we'll go to you" is her motto. This interviewer learned that Kathy can be a very persuasive person. She successfully recruited me to her community involvement committee. SGMP Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter is fortunate to have Kathy's example and leadership.

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Supplier Spotlight: Jim Deuser

by Murray Moore, Texas Education Agency

Jim Deuser of the McAllen, Texas CVB is a relatively new member to SGMP, having joined in August 2006. Jim is a Sales Manager for the CVB on a “part time” basis after retiring from JC Penney where he worked in a variety of jobs for 31 years.

“I was originally contracted by the CVB here to produce a Travel Show and Expo, and to make sales calls to Austin,” recalls Jim. “That was six years ago. We have recently completed a large state-of-the-art convention center. Now my job is devoted to ‘luring’ people to McAllen to use this great new facility.” Besides this, Jim conducts workshops devoted to *Customer Service, Performance Reviews, Salesmanship* and other business disciplines.

“Joining SGMP was a business decision for me, just as it is for most members, I suppose. However, active participation has become a distinct pleasure apart from any gain that might accrue. This organization seems to be comprised of people who sincerely like each other. Moreover, SGMP strikes me as being committed to building community as well as networking and building the skills of individuals. Every meeting has a service component and I like that,” Jim concluded. Jim is a member of the newsletter committee, which he particularly enjoys because he likes to write.

Jim is a native Texan, originally from Dallas. He is married to Joyce, a JC Penney store manager and they have two children and three grandchildren. His hobbies include “lot’s of reading,” golf and scuba diving.

McAllen, where Jim has lived for the past 15 years, is a community experiencing explosive growth and change. “Twenty years ago, our economy was based on agriculture and tourism. Today, tourism is still going strong, with hundreds of thousands of visitors annually from Mexico to the South and ‘Winter Texans’ here from the North. Additionally, we have a very large manufacturing community in Reynosa, Mexico, just ten miles away. This business has generated support facilities in and around McAllen which just continue to grow.” Jim concluded our conversation with the comment that McAllen is an incredibly exciting place to live in and to visit. “My wife is retiring in just sixteen months, but we have no plans to move. We love the climate, the culture, and especially the people here. I plan to keep ‘selling McAllen’ for quite a while and participating in SGMP while I’m doing it.”



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How to Save on Your Food and Beverage Costs

by Jim Zukowski

At a recent meeting of Meeting Professionals International (MPI), a session was held on cost-saving tips to follow when planning a meal event. The following items should be considered when planning your function:

- Buy bottled water in bulk and custom brand it, instead of serving the expensive branded bottles hotels typically provide.
- Put reception food tables against the wall rather than in the center of a room. Less access to the table means less food consumption, especially if your budget is tight.
- If your attendees can't tell the difference between standard and premium liquor brands, don't invest in the premium. You may want to consider just offering beer and wine.
- Put less expensive food closer to the front door and the more expensive food in the back.
- Check out your venue's inventory of tables, chairs, linens and decorations. Using in-house stock is a lot cheaper than renting.
- Eliminate waste by planning the number of special meals (vegetarian, kosher, etc.) that will be needed, so extra meat dishes don't go to waste.
- Make sure you have enough time for the type of meal you plan to provide. As an example, don't change a continental breakfast into a five-course themed breakfast event. If the multi-course meal takes longer than anticipated, you'll have meeting attendees running out of the dining area to make their first meeting of the day leaving behind tons of food left uneaten.

Planning your food events carefully will allow you to stay on budget and provide your attendees with a satisfied food and beverage event.

Adapted from an article on MeetingsNet, April 1, 2007.

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 (jzukowski@austin.rr.com) or Karla Starkweather (karla.starkweather@hhsc.state.tx.us) for more details.

Joy on the Job: Creating a Positive Workplace Environment

by Stacy Janecka, CMP, Office of the Attorney General

This interactive session with laughter provided easy-to-remember ways to create a positive workplace environment. The audience learned how to use the “STICK to it” method, a five-part strategy to make their workplace more fun and productive while making employees more energized and creative. STICK stands for:

-S Stress Management

Control how you react to stressful situations through how you perceive it. For example, instead of letting rush hour stress you out, listen to your favorite music while in the car. Anticipate when you will find yourself in stressful situations. You can always have reading material with you when you find yourself in a long line. Strive for a balanced life style between the four components of 1) Mental/intellectual, 2) Social/emotional, 3) Spiritual and 4) Physical. Picture the four legs on a stool for these four components and if one is out of balance, your life feels wobbly!

-T Teamwork

Focus on meetings where everyone has a common goal and make them “marvelous.” Begin and end meetings with “good news reports” including personal news to keep things positive. Announce a theme for the meeting, such as sports,

movies, holidays, etc., just to add some creativity and fun.

-I Inspiration

Rewarding people in the workplace and using inspirational quotes are inexpensive ways to inspire others. Handwritten thank you notes that are sincere or giving praise as soon as a goal is achieved are easy things that managers as well as co-workers can do for others.

-C Communication

Use the word “we” more and “you” less so that you don’t come across as scolding. Using the word “we” helps people feel they are part of the conversation and increases interactive dialogue.

-K Kindness

Know the difference between empathy and sympathy. People want you to show that you care and understand about their situation rather than you feeling sorry for them.

So remember to STICK to it just by trying one of the strategies above at your workplace in the next week and see what happens! You could have so much fun at work that it won’t feel like working at all!

Based on a workshop by Edward Leigh, M.A., conducted at the SGMP 2007 National Conference.

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Creating Powerful PowerPoint Presentations

by Connie Ramos, Homewood Suites Austin South

I had anticipated my seminar for weeks. James Spellos, CMP, came highly recommended by fellow SGMP members who had seen him in action. I thought if anyone can teach me PowerPoint, James would be the man! Needless to say I had very high expectations and I'm happy to report, they were not only met but exceeded.

Because I had never created a PowerPoint presentation, much less dabbled in this program, I was very nervous about my ability to keep up with the other attendees. After a brief survey of the room, most of my classmates seemed to have worked with the program for years. Thankfully, James was able to remain elementary enough for me to follow and yet detailed enough to still teach others who had experience. The entire process was all very new to me. I learned how to animate text, add pictures and even add videos to my presentation. As naïve as it might sound, I was truly amazed by all of the variations I could apply to my presentation. In the end, I had a complete presentation with a

chef dog picture and a surfer video. Now I don't know how job appropriate my end result was but boy did it make a great impression on me!

There was a lot of information given out at this seminar, so James was kind enough to send us each a file that contained the information we learned during class. If anyone would like a copy, you can email me at connie_ramos@hilton.com and I will forward one to you.

I was so excited about all that I learned that I took a second class that James was teaching entitled "Critical Excel Tools for the Meeting Professional." And that was just as good! I highly urge anyone if given the opportunity to attend Mr. Spellos' seminars to indulge yourself. You will be given tools to amaze all of your friends!

Based on a workshop by James Spellos, CMP, conducted at the SGMP 2007 National Conference.

Look What's Ahead

August by Lanna Johnson

August 17 will be here before you know it. Get ready to head to Holiday Inn Emerald Beach in Corpus Christi for the annual Chapter Retreat. Kacie Sicilia, CHSP, will be supporting our chapter for this year's retreat as well as the Corpus Christi Convention and Visitors Bureau. You will learn how to add "zing" to your meetings and about RPPs - great topics for fiscally-challenged government employees. The supplier tradeshow is an excellent way for suppliers and planners to network and plan for future events. And don't forget the brainstorming session. It's your chapter so invite someone and get involved.

September by Jim Zukowski

Our September Education Program is scheduled for September 13, 2007, at the Embassy Suites North Hotel. The topic for the meeting is the "State of the Travel Industry." Representatives from the Texas Travel Industry profession will serve on a panel to discuss the state of the travel industry in Texas. Currently, the panel will be represented by professionals from the Texas Chamber of Commerce, the Texas Travel Industry Association and the Economic Development and Tourism branch of the Office of the Governor. The program plans to be informative, educational and beneficial to all attendees.

October by Bob Nichols

On October 11, 2007, our meeting will be hosted by the Hilton Austin Airport and we will extend thanks to those managers who have provided consistent support to our members. Our presentation this month is a continuing effort to provide information about Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs) abilities to support planners and suppliers in achieving successful meetings. Panelist will include **Mark Thompson**, President of the Texas Association of Convention & Visitors Bureau; **Connie Ledbetter**, South Padre Island CVB; **Diane Cayce**, Fort Worth CVB; **Dana Williams**, CMP, Dallas CVB; as well as a representative from the Greater Houston CVB.



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September 13, 2007

Chapter Meeting
State of the Travel Industry
Embassy Suites Hotel Austin North
5901 North IH 35

October 11, 2007

Chapter Meeting
CVBs and their Services
Hilton Austin Airport
9515 Hotel Drive



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