

Lone Star News

Award Winning Newsletter

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

www.sgmpaustin.org

Vol. XV, No. 1
1st Quarter 2008

SADDLE UP! A SPECIAL INVITATION

AROUND THIS TIME, many of us are contemplating on attending this year's Annual Education Conference in Dallas, Texas. Let me take this opportunity to invite you to join me and fellow members in taking advantage of the **BIG Ideas in Education** training workshops where you will learn how to apply educational resource tools to help you get the job done.

The conference team has pulled together a comprehensive schedule of tracks and pre-conference professional certification courses that you will not want to miss. Top-notch speakers have been carefully selected to ensure you walk away from the conference feeling that you have participated in and benefited from one of the best conferences ever attended. The trade show will showcase our supplier members' services, products, and venues that you will need to help plan and execute your organization's conference or special event.

This year we decided to change things up a bit. The new look and feel of the conference format and schedule will allow maximum participation for everyone. The workshops, trade show, and networking will provide greater opportunity for both our planners and suppliers to share their experiences and ideas in taking advantage of member benefits.

Our chapter presidents are hard at work revamping the format of the **Chapter Operations Workshop** to ensure all chapter boards of directors learn the tips, techniques, and strategies to help a chapter succeed. Instead of holding one workshop this year, four separate workshops will be held that will focus on the following primary operational areas: program development, treasurers' responsibilities, fundraising, and membership recruitment and retention. Attendance is highly recommended for all chapter board members.

We also decided to hold a **Sam Gilmer Awards Luncheon** instead of a banquet this year. The new format will give our honorees more time to share their accomplishments among members who attend. Immediately following the awards luncheon, planner members will visit the trade show and converse with supplier members about their specific meeting requirements. In addition, for the first time ever, trustees of the Sam Gilmer Institute will have an information booth on the trade show floor. Stop by the booth to introduce yourself and partake in the mini-orientation sessions that share what their role is and what they are doing on your behalf within the organization.

The networking opportunity continues during the **Farewell Fiesta** on Friday night. This unique event will close out the official portion of our conference and provide additional time with fellow members who have traveled from across the United States.

There is so much more that I could share with you on why you should attend. However, I will leave it up to you to include your own reasons to attend this year's conference. For more details about the workshops, speakers, trade show, and how to register for the conference, visit our web site, www.sgmp.org. I do hope you will "saddle up" to join me and fellow members in making this year's national conference a success for all attendees.

I look forward to seeing you in Dallas!

Sincerely,
Melody Kebe, CMP, CGMP
National President, SGMP

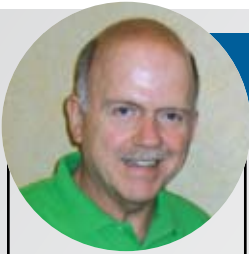


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about the workshops,
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and how to register
for the conference,
visit our web site
www.sgmp.org

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**JIM
ZUKOWSKI**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

WE MISS YOU! Our attendance at the monthly education meetings needs to increase. We have had a series of excellent and thought provoking programs covering a wide array of topics related to meeting planning. Our slate of educational offerings for the rest of the year promises to be equally exciting. **Make every effort to attend one of our upcoming meetings.** You won't be disappointed and you'll come away from the meeting with valuable information you can use on the job.

The National SGMP Conference is right around the corner. It'll take place in Dallas, Texas, June 11-14, 2008, at the Hilton Anatole Hotel. The preliminary information on the conference looks exciting. We hope that you will make every effort to attend. Hopefully, our scholarships will help many of you to be able attend the conference. The chapter is devoted to rewarding those chapter members who contribute to the organization. The contributions you can make can be varied; so it's never too late to get involved. Go to www.sgmp.org to view the preliminary conference agenda and get a feel for the exciting time you can have up in Dallas. Several off-site activities in conjunction with the conference are being planned.

Our chapter has submitted applications for the "Program of the Year Award" and the "Newsletter of the Year Award." We have won this recognition in the past, and we feel as though our programs and newsletters rank the best in the nation. We'll be notified at the conference as to the actual winners of the awards. Keep your fingers crossed!!

Membership is still a pressing concern for all of the SGMP chapters. We are seeing many planners not renewing their memberships, and we are ascertaining the exact reasons why these individuals want to withdraw from the Society. We hope that you will continue your membership and value the relationships and opportunities that membership in this organization offers. Membership to the Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter is money well spent and an investment in your professional career. Keep up your membership and you will not be disappointed.

Enjoy this exciting time in your life. **The board looks forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming meetings in Austin and the national conference in Dallas.** ★



Board Buzz

Rob Casias, National Guard Association of Texas

THE "BOARD BUZZ" is intended to give our members insight into the work your board members are doing in support of our chapter. In the next few issues, I will introduce each executive committee member — spotlighting what their roles and committee assignments are on the board.

In this issue, I would like to spotlight our board treasurer, Donna Cottle, CMP, CHSC. Donna has been a member of SGMP for 11 years. This is her second tour of duty as treasurer. Article 5, of our SGMP Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter Bylaws, spells out the formal responsibilities of our treasurer, but as we all know, the main responsibility is the maintenance of all of our chapter's financial records. This also includes keeping each committee chair informed of his/her committee's annual budget expenses and revenue generated on a monthly basis. Reports

also need to be filed with our national headquarters. Failure to maintain and file timely reports can lead to our chapter's loss of funds from the national headquarters. Donna juggles this important task while keeping up with the duties of her day job as Account Director for Specialty Markets with the Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau.

In addition to serving as treasurer, Donna serves on our chapter's membership committee. Donna's dedicated commitment to SGMP at both the chapter and national levels is demonstrated by her previous board tenures as Director Supplier, 2nd Vice President and two years of service on the national board of directors. You will often see Donna at monthly board meetings, committee meetings and chapter meetings — all the while keeping that moneybag under tight wraps. ★



FINANCIAL REPORT

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

Income

December-January-February 2008

Monthly Meeting Dues	\$ 1,665.00
Revenue Sharing	2,730.00
Silent Auction	4,517.00
Raffles	259.00
Cookbooks	5.00
No Shows	50.00
Sponsorship Ads	250.00

Total Income 9,476.00

Total Expenses 4,183.97



Ed Howard, Chair, Hilton Hotel Austin Airport

GREETINGS AND I HOPE THE NEW YEAR HAS BEEN GREAT FOR YOU SO FAR!

ONE OF THE MOST frequently asked questions with regard to a Society membership is: "What can the Society do for me?" The answer honestly, depends on you. What is it that you want from a Society? What you get out of any Society is totally up to what you put in. I personally believe the greatest benefit of the membership is the networking and camaraderie that happens between members. However, to fully gain from this you must participate . . . an investment of time and effort in the Societies meetings and events.

I would like to share with you some feedback from our June 2007 Chapter Survey regarding the benefits one receives from our Chapter. All comments are from our members and are anonymous.

QUESTION: *What do you feel is the most important benefit you receive from being a member of SGMP?*

- Relationships for Texas and National Level/Education
- Networking and education – building relationships
- Learning more about planning government meetings
- Meeting representatives of the travel and hospitality industry. It's also great to have first-hand knowledge of meeting and lodging facilities
- Education in conjunction with making contacts with suppliers
- Networking and the ability for planners to understand the suppliers needs/challenges and vice versa

Welcome Our Newest Members

Planners

- Terri Stafford, Coordinator, Statewide Parent Involvement Initiative, Region 16 ESC
- Jean Bonner, Program Administrator, Texas Justice Court Training Center
- Marlon Drakes, Program Administrator, Texas Justice Court Training Center
- Carrie Harper, Program Assistant II, Texas Municipal Courts Education Center (name changed from Rene Weller)
- Terry Hix, Senior Planner, Mandala Group
- Ken Nunley, CIO, Keena and Company

Suppliers

- John Rowe, CASE, Director of Sales & Marketing, St. Anthony, Wyndham Historic Hotel (name changed from Terry Hix)
- Brittany Robbins, Sales Manager, Hyatt Regency San Antonio on the Riverwalk (name changed from Tania Tadevic)
- Sheri Teller, SMERF Sales Manager, Galveston Island CVB
- Rebecca McLaughlin, Director of Sales & Catering, Holiday Inn Select Tyler

THANK YOU FOR RENEWING

Deidra Davidson, Disputer Resolution Center (DRC) | Cobe Dunn, Department of Information Resources | Gina Garcia, Office of Rural Community Affairs | Juan Hernandez, Office of Public Insurance Counsel | Angelia Johnson, Texas Department of Insurance | Kim Kizer, Secretary of State/Elections Division | Donna Cottle, CMP, CHSC, Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau | Barbara Glaser Fryer, Freeman | Monte Green, Houston Hobby Airport Marriott | Ed Howard, Hilton Austin Airport | Patty Kerr-Rouse, Hotel Galvez | Ann Knoebel, William Knox Holt Conference Center | Vicki Lloyd, Wyndham Garden Hotel | Steven Shove, Holiday Inn Express & Suites

The Chapter is always looking at ways that we can give back to our members. During 2008 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 your certificates. Enjoy your free meeting!

It pays to renew on time!

On the Move

Terry Hix formally with the St Anthony Wyndham Hotel is now with the Mandala-Group.com. If you know of any our members that have made career changes, please keep me informed @ Ed.howard@hilton.com.

News from National

The National Board has approved, effective March 1, 2008, a fee of \$25 will be charged for any name change to an individual or organizational supplier and associate supplier membership. You can review and utilize the NAME CHANGE FORM at our web site, www.sgmp.org under the MEMBERSHIP icon. It will be necessary to pay the fee in full before the change is made by the membership office and your online password for the web site can be issued and the new member name listed. This fee does not apply to planner members.

You may contact the membership office should you have any questions at 800-827-8916.

Carolyn Bentsel, Membership Director

Current Member Statistics

Our Chapter has 177 members with a ratio of 51.8% Planners and 48.2% Suppliers. We have 87 Planners and 81 members.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

Kathy Casarez, Chair, State Bar of Texas



WE ARE WELL INTO the first quarter of 2008 and our Community Involvement Committee has already had two very successful events. Our January project was Lisa's Hopechest. The committee collected numerous articles of clothing at our January chapter meeting. I delivered those items to Lisa's Hopechest which is located off of Airport Blvd in East Austin. Much to my surprise I discovered that the Lisa after which Lisa's Hopechest was named was an old friend of mine, Lisa Benford. Lisa explained to me that she started Lisa's Hopechest 17 years ago. Her goal was to help those in need seek employment opportunities. Lisa knew that many of these folks were down on their luck and needed to make a good first impression on would-be employers. So, 17 years later Lisa is still at it. It was good seeing Lisa again and she wanted me to convey to all our members her deepest appreciation.



The committee project for February was Safeplace. We collected old cell phones and personal hygiene products to assist this organization. Safeplace was established to end sexual and domestic violence through safety, healing, prevention and social change. Created in 1998, Safeplace was the result of a merger between the Austin Rape Crisis Center and the Center for Battered Women. Our SGMP members were very generous in their donations of cell phones and travel size toiletries. The phones collected will be reprogrammed to make 911 calls only and distributed to those in need. The personal hygiene products were packaged along with bite-sized chocolates and donated to the center the week of Valentine's Day. Safeplace also provides a 100-bed Family Shelter for battered adults and children. Thanks to everyone for their generosity. ★

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ADULT EDUCATION AND CHAPTER 17TH BIRTHDAY

Robert E. Nichols, CMP, Governor's Center for Management Development

BAM! The Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter kicked it up a notch with Grace Nied's "Adult Education and Learning Styles" setting the pace for our 2008 educational year. Chad Gluckson and the Sheraton Austin Hotel staff provided an exceptional chapter 17th birthday celebration. Ms. Nied started this interactive educational session by inviting those in attendance to consider the worst meeting or training attended, then to think of a situation when a new skill was successfully learned.

Grace shared with those in attendance, one way in which adults learn best is when they can take responsibility for their own learning. Additionally, the physical, emotional, and intellectual factors are directly related to adult learning. An important take away of this presentation that shared the Principles of Adult Learning was the "RAMP 2 FAME." Defined as Recency, Appropriateness, Motivation, Primacy; 2-way communication; and Feedback, Active learning, Multi-sense learning, and Exercise. Among other influences Grace shared, the impact of generational differences on adult learning. The essence of this training session invited all to consider how best to apply this information to meeting planning. Learning opportunities such as this only happen as a result of the efforts of Chad Gluckson and the professionalism of the Sheraton Austin Hotel staff. ★



♥ BE MY VALENTINE! ♥

Jason Sechrest, Keena & Company

THE FEBRUARY MEETING was held at the Radisson Austin Hotel & Suites Town Lake and was hosted by the Radisson, Keena & Company and McAllen Convention & Visitors Bureau. The theme of the meeting was Valentines. The decorations were precisely calculated in a velvet red color that was most elegant, the décor was provided by Keena and Company. All members who attended received rose shaped chocolates and goodies. The food was amazing and included a prime rib station, a pasta station, assorted cheese and crackers, and fruits with a chocolate fondue. It was the most attended meeting thus far with over 50 members in attendance. Thank you to our sponsors for a wonderful evening.

IT'S TIME TO SPEED NETWORK! Suppliers got to know their planners with the meeting industry version of "Speed Dating!" The guest speaker, Suzanne Black, was extremely motivating in her speed meeting techniques. She guided us throughout the evening by explaining how important our first impressions are with people we meet through work. We learned how to make a positive lasting impression that would be memorable. ★



MARCH MEETING: WRITE FOR SUCCESS

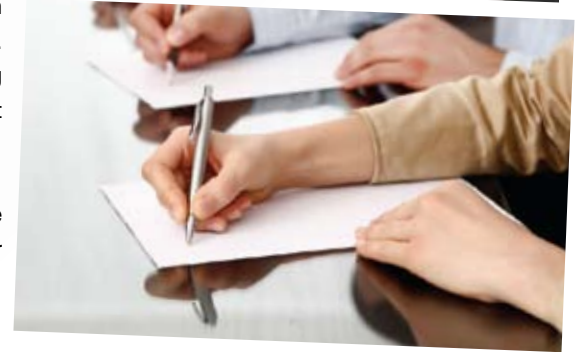
Karla Starkweather, Texas Health and Human Services Commission

NORRIS CONFERENCE CENTER hosted our March 13 meeting and the room was perfect for our needs. They offered a wonderful array of delectable treats that members munched on during the meeting. During the announcements, Corey Maxwell told us about the plans for renovations and additions to the center that are currently taking place.



Jennifer Lazarow, a trainer at The University of Texas at Austin Professional Development Center, provided our program, "Write for Success." In addition to some simple writing techniques, she presented many great ideas about writing for your e-mail audience. Lazarow suggests using a top-down approach, putting the most important point first. She also said that electronically, if your message is more than three lines, it is hard on the eyes so use paragraph breaks when appropriate. Bulleted or numbered lists work well when requesting more than one item or action. Lazarow's handout provides many tips on how to streamline your writing.

A big Texas thank you to our speaker Jennifer Lazarow for furnishing us with such valuable information and thank you also to Deborah Lampkin at the Norris Conference Center for planning our menu and providing the meeting space. ★



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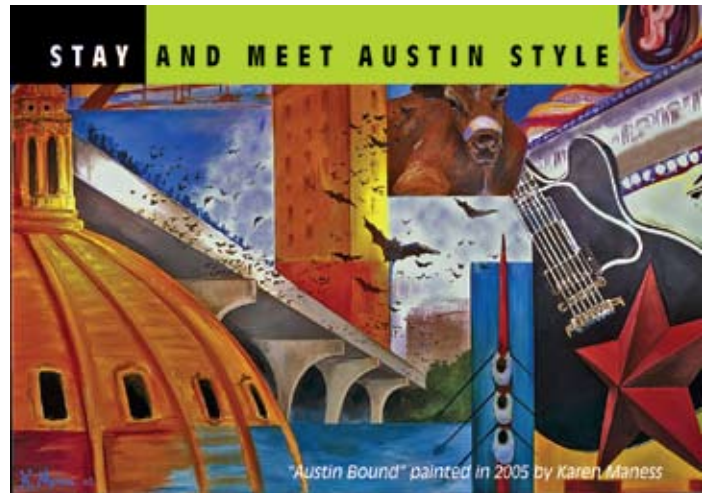
Check the SGMP website www.sgmp.org for updates on the 2008 Annual Education Conference!

Annual Conference Charity Information



HEROES FOR CHILDREN is a nonprofit organization providing financial and social assistance to families, within the state of Texas, of children (ages 0-22 years) battling cancer. Heroes for Children was founded in memory of Taylor Anne Brewton and Allison Leigh Scott. Taylor was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia in December of 2000. After a courageous

battle and two stem cell transplants, Taylor's battle with Leukemia ended on November 26, 2001 at the young age of four. Allie Scott was diagnosed with the same disease as Taylor on May 4, 2004 at four months of age. After three rounds of chemotherapy and a cord blood transplant, Allie too lost her battle with leukemia on September 13, 2004, when she was nine months old. Taylor and Allie's tremendous courage and amazing spirit touched the lives of many in this community and across the country. Please check with your local chapters on their efforts for raising funds for this year's charity.



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BASIC BLACK

Lydia Stary, CMP, Department of Veterans Affairs

JUST OUT OF CURIOSITY, how many of you read the Oprah recommendations for great books? I am one that has read almost every single one of her recommendations. The majority of them I have really liked, but I must admit that there are some that I just cannot possibly get into and enjoy.

Back in November, I believe, Oprah had Cathie Black on her show. Cathie Black is the President of Hearst Magazines. Hearst Corporation is one of the world's largest publishers of monthly magazines. Ms. Black manages the financial performance and development of some of the industry's best-known titles: *Cosmopolitan*; *Esquire*; *Good Housekeeping*; *Harper's Bazaar*; *Marie Claire*; *O, the Oprah Magazine*; *Popular Mechanics*; *Redbook*; and *Town and Country* — twenty magazines in all. She also oversees nearly two hundred international editions of those magazines in more than one hundred countries. Impressive or what? I sat and listened to Ms. Black and knew that without a doubt, I must read a book that she had just written.

The book is titled *Basic Black, The Essential Guide for Getting Ahead at Work (and in Life)*. Whether you are a sales manager that one day strives to become a general manager of a four star hotel or you are a meeting planner who strives to some day start his or her own contract planning company, this book is a "must read" for you.



One of the things I found reading this book is that it was almost like reading her autobiography. I definitely learned a lot about the magazine industry, but that is not what makes this book worth buying and reading. The fact that this lady from Podunk, America set out to make something of herself and in 2006 was named one of Fortune's "50 Most Powerful Women in American Business" for the seventh consecutive year is what makes it a truly great book for all of us to read and get inspired to continue to reach for what sometimes seem like the unreachable goal. The book stresses how we must seize any opportunity we have in the workplace to reach that goal.

Even though I am reaching that age when I should be thinking of retiring, I found the book extremely motivating. Why retire? I can continue to work at reaching that rung on the ladder. Leadership? Since when is there an age limit? Passion and power? Whether you are 25 or 65, you must charge ahead with all the strength you can muster. Passion and power does not have to be aimed necessarily towards the workplace, do we not still have to maintain that strength at home with family and friends?

Is the book worth a read? In my opinion, it definitely was an inspiration for me to continue to pursue my passions and strive to achieve my very best. Read it, and let me know what you think. ★

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CGMP CERTIFICATION

Kelly Roche, CGMP, Irving Convention & Visitors Bureau

THE CERTIFIED GOVERNMENT MEETING PROFESSIONALS' Certification Training course is designed to provide training for the government meeting professional whose work is governed by the rules and regulations of the federal, state and local government. Through discussion and practice, you will be introduced to the agencies that write policy related government events, and learn where to find answers to your questions. To be eligible to take the CGMP Certification Training course, you must have been a current member of SGMP for at least SIX MONTHS prior to date of the training course date. To retain your CGMP certification you must keep your SGMP membership current. You must re-certify every three years.



The course takes place over a three day period. The content of the class is designed for those that have been in meetings management for at least one year. The course covers a wide range of materials related to the planning and management of government meetings. Class attendees are expected to participate in the class discussions and activities. While the class time covers the materials, it may be necessary for study time in the evenings to prepare for the exam which takes place on day three.

Class attendees receive a training manual to facilitate a three-day program. Materials covered in the examination will be found in this manual or discussed in class. This course teaches recognized

industry practices cited in the Convention Industry Council (CIC) Manual, and other relevant industry guides. The CIC Manual will be provided and serve as the reference guide used for this course. The participant is not expected to memorize the content of the CIC manual but to use it as a resource.

The class is most generally facilitated by Garland Preddy CGMP, retired meeting planner for the US Marshals. The class is administered by the USDA Graduate School. Please refer to the National SGMP Website www.sgmp.org for the upcoming class schedules. ★

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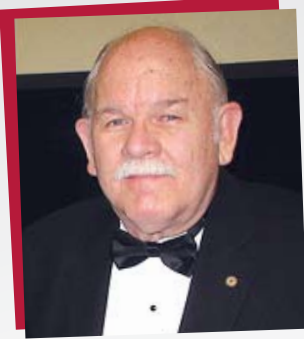
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PLANNER SPOTLIGHT: ROBERT E. NICHOLS, CMP

Karla Starkweather, Texas Health and Human Services Commission



ROBERT NICHOLS, CMP, otherwise known as “Buffalo Bob” is one of our chapter’s hardest working members. He usually performs his duties behind the scenes and he is always ready and willing to take on any task that is given.

Bob, whose current position is at the Governor’s Center for Management Development at the University of Texas at Austin LBJ School of Public Affairs, has a long and illustrious history in the United States Coast Guard. His Coast Guard career began as a boat coxswain stationed at Sabine Pass, Texas. After communications training he became a wireless radioman serving on board numerous ships in the Mediterranean, Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. During the Viet Nam Era, he was assigned to

Long Range Aids to navigation stations in the Philippine Islands as well as service and supply communications on aircraft and supply ships in the Philippines. Additional sea service included three icebreakers conducting scientific and re-supply operations in both Polar Regions and radio operator aboard the United States Coast Guard Barque EAGLE during the cadet sailing cruise to Europe. Promoted to Chief Warrant Officer, he additionally served as communications coordinator for the International Search and Rescue computer system, New York City; Commanding Officer Coast Guard Radio Station, Guam; and Chief, Coast Guard Telecommunications Training School. His last assignment was on the staff of the Commandant, United States Coast Guard as liaison to emergency communications planners at the Pentagon. Thank you for serving our country Bob!

After serving 33 years in the Coast Guard as a communications specialist, Bob joined the Governor’s Center as the logistical support manager, a job for which he is well suited. He joined SGMP in 2000 to enhance his knowledge of meeting logistics and support. As an SGMP member, he jumped in immediately and joined the education, membership and newsletter committees. He writes very creative, original articles for the newsletter, helps plan meetings throughout the year and calls members whose memberships are about to be dropped to encourage them to renew and enjoy all the benefits SGMP has to offer. He might as well be considered a member of the fundraising committee because of his generosity in donating raffle and silent auction items. Bob’s current, proudest accomplishment is earning the Certified Meeting Professional designation. We all know how much work that takes.

Even with all this work experience, Bob still takes the time to “smell the roses.” In his spare time, Bob says he likes “to chase his bride around the yard.” His wife of 29 years, Sandra, is also a frequent visitor to SGMP parties and silent auctions. Bob is also an avid fan of railroad modeling and has a room full of railroads and accessories. Bob’s cheerfulness and sense of humor add much to our chapter meetings. If you have not met Buffalo Bob, it’s about time. He’ll greet you with a “Happy Thursday” at all the meetings. And you’ll have to ask him about his two and a half pups. ★



Yay! Buffalo Bob!

SUPPLIER SPOTLIGHT: ED HOWARD

Karla Starkweather, Texas Health and Human Services Commission



YOU CAN ALWAYS TELL when Ed Howard enters the room with his hearty laugh and welcoming smile. Ed works as sales manager for the Texas state association and government markets at the Austin Hilton Airport. He says he is “a veteran in the industry” as he has 30 plus years experience from busboy to sales manager.

Before coming to the Austin Airport Hilton, Howard was sales manager for three years at

Doubletree Guest Suites, Austin; and, previously, he served in sales and marketing positions with hotels in both Dallas and Austin; with the Dallas Convention & Visitors Bureau; and with companies in the private sector in Dallas and Austin.

A native of Scottsdale, Arizona, Ed received his degree from Arizona State University in 1975. He earned his CMP (Certified Meeting Professional) designation in 1996 and has taught/mentored CMP courses in Austin.

Ed’s interest in the hotel industry began at a very early age. At 10 years old, he always loved staying in hotels, enjoying the swimming pools and taking advantage of room service. “After the experience of staying at hotels, I decided to open one in my home,” says Ed. I would play ‘make believe” hotel with my siblings. Our bedrooms were

the guest rooms and I would prepare pancakes and deliver the food to their rooms. Throughout the day we would enjoy our swimming pool and at lunchtime, I would grill hamburgers for us all,” he says. Destiny, indeed.

SGMP has been an important aspect of Ed’s professional life. He says, “I personally believe the greatest benefit of the membership is the networking and camaraderie that happens between members.” Ed enjoys the excellent educational opportunities that the chapter provides. “The sharing of ideas with other hoteliers and government meeting planners is priceless,” Ed says.

Ed currently serves as the chapter’s 2nd Vice President and is chair of the membership committee — a job that he does very well with the help of his many volunteers. He also has memberships in the Texas Society of Association Executives (TSAE) and Meeting Professionals International (MPI). When Ed is not working, he loves to be outdoors, biking or working in his yard. ★

“The sharing of ideas with other hoteliers and government meeting planners is priceless . . .”

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HOSPITALITY TRENDS IN 2008

Darlene Morgan, Crowne Plaza Houston North

IN LOOKING AT TRENDS FOR 2008, it is important that the meeting planner and supplier work side by side to create a “one-of-a-kind” meeting. With the uncertainty we see in the stock market as well as the mortgage meltdown, we are going into 2008 with a bit of trepidation. In government planning, many budgets are being defined or cut forcing the planner to carefully choose where he or she places meetings in order to get the best value.

According to Smith Travel Research, room rates increased 6.1% in 2007 to an average of \$103.73 per night. Many markets are increasing their supply of hotels, therefore making hotels more negotiable if new rooms and meeting spaces are coming into the market. It is very important for the planner to negotiate dates farther out if possible and to be aware of the new hotels opening in the city they are citing.

In 2007, the typical meeting lasted three and a half days across all markets. One way to stay within a tighter budget is to shorten meetings by one half day and to utilize your meeting space more adequately. Tightening your meeting schedule and exiting after three full days would save substantially. Additionally, it allows the hotel to sell its meeting space on that half day to a different party and its maximize revenue. It is a win-win situation for planners and suppliers.

Another hot trend in the industry is booking hotels that have gone “green” or will work with you in “green” meetings. This has already proven to be an important factor involving meetings in 2008 and is also valuable when trying to trim costs. Some cost-saving measures include putting pitchers of waters on tables with glasses instead of styrofoam cups, recycling you paper used for programs, and printing on both sides to the paper. Hotels can help by using containers of condiments rather than offering single serving packets. As we move along this year we will research and compile additional tips on how to have a successful “green” meeting.

It does appear that the pendulum is swinging towards the meeting planner in 2008. A survey taken by The Research Hospitality Group and PFK Consulting along with Convention South Magazine brings to light issues that help hoteliers understand the minds of planners.

Favors that influence site selection ranged from quality of meeting space and service at 1.5 (the most influential); guest rooms, room availability, and quality at 1.7; on-site technology at 2.7; and recreational activities and room tax in the 3% range.

Also in the survey, a strong sales staff ranked high marks — the positive relationship between hotel and planner helps ensure the concessions asked for (1.8); easier to book business (2.0); shorter lead times (2.6); better rates and attrition clauses (2.7); larger room blocks (2.8). There is no doubt that a positive relationship between planner and supplier helps the planner reach a successful end result — affordable and productive meetings.

In summary, 2008 seems to have a few changes on the horizon. Government meeting planners have a challenge in knowing and staying within their rules and regulations in selecting sites, staying budget conscious, acquiring per diem rates, and watching the ethics and regulations. By staying abreast of the trends in 2008, hoteliers and suppliers can work hand in hand to create successful meetings. As mentioned above, planners who can book farther out are having an easier time acquiring desired rates and concessions.

Building a strong relationship with a knowledgeable and trained hospitality manager will help make your meetings in Texas and all over the world successful. After all, successful meetings and hospitality go hand in hand. ★

“The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it.”

Theodore Roosevelt



INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATION

Robert E. Nichols, CMP, Governor's Office for Management Development

THE INTERNET HAS PROVIDED US with an unsurpassed ability to communicate around the corner or around the world with a blink of the eye through the use of e-mail and Instant Messaging (IM). We are able to request and provide desired information with the flick of the index finger. Speed is the order of the day in communications. Thus making a significant impact on our ability to accomplish many things in the course of a day. A whole new language is being created as a result of this high-speed communication. E-mails have replaced letters as the preferred form of communication for business interactions.

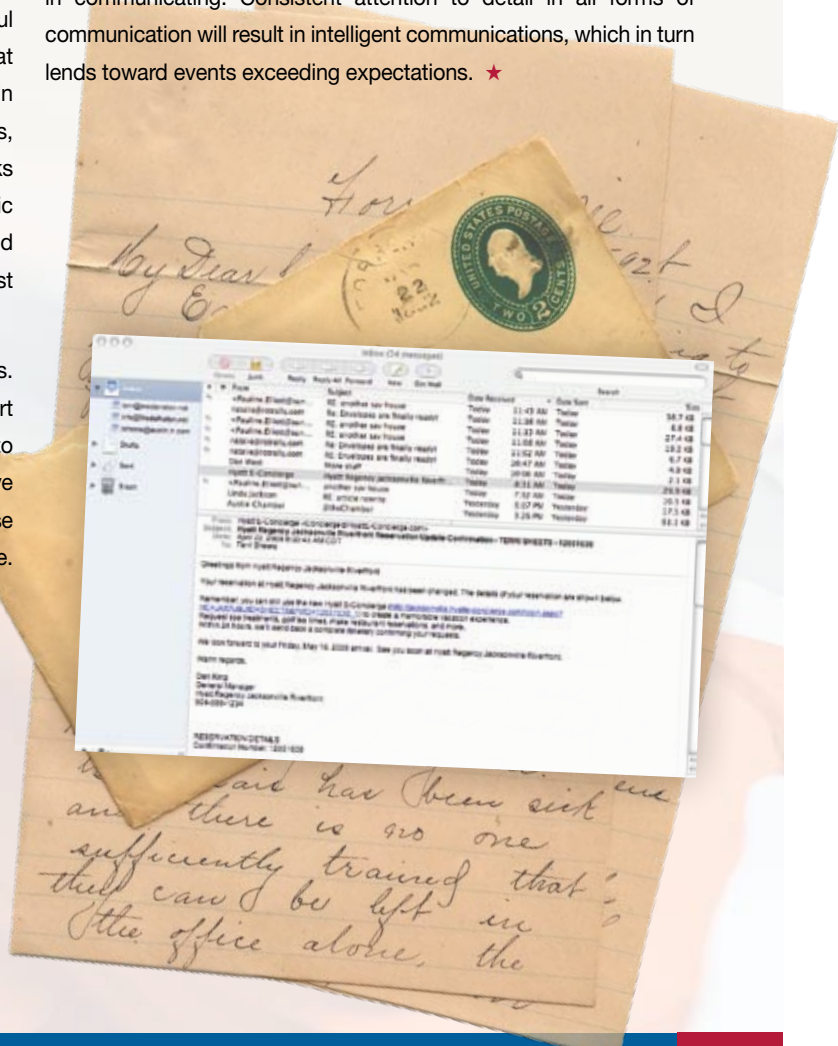
Letters fostered a certain formality in tone, form, and accuracy. E-mails have become an odd hybrid of a quick note and hasty phone call. This written form is still evolving offering casualness and ease, which sometimes results in messages being misunderstood. Grammatical and spelling errors are deemed more acceptable in e-mail communications, which results in a tendency to avoid reviewing or proofreading the text before executing the send icon. Mistakes more easily slip by. These mistakes are transiting into the written media, books, periodicals, newspapers, etc. We must make every effort to restore the highest professionalism in our written word. President George Washington, a prolific writer, became an amazingly careful communicator. He chose his words wisely and seldom assumed that anything in writing would remain private. President Abraham Lincoln was just as careful in his writings. Every one of his major addresses, the First and Second Inaugural addresses, his selected remarks that became known as the Gettysburg Address, and his Last Public Address were meticulously prepared and read from a completed manuscript. The need for accuracy in the written word remains just as important today.

We are consistently giving up our ability to be effective communicators. These magnificent computers are great tools that support administrative staffs, which in turn make significant contributions to their organizations. Computers are in fact taking away administrative skills through the reliance on spell check and grammar tools. These effective tools are overly relied upon, resulting in their regular misuse.

We regularly find misused words not caught by the computer's grammar tools, i.e., "We will need too of those." This is becoming an accepted norm in written communications. Books, periodicals, newspapers, letters, and e-mails are being negatively impacted by the trend to do it fast and get it done, with less and less apparent concern about accuracy. Daily we experience challenges in effectively understanding one another.

A young ensign is working late one evening. As he clocks out of his office at about 8 p.m. he sees the admiral standing by the classified document shredder in the hallway, a piece of paper in his hand. "Do you know how to work this thing?" the admiral asks. "My secretary's gone home and I don't know how to run it." "Yes, sir," says the young ensign, who turns on the machine, takes the paper from the admiral, and feeds it in. "Thanks," says the admiral, "I just need one copy."

Just getting it done may result in less than the desired outcome. The lack of effective communications is often attributed to inattention or haste in expressing oneself. Event planners expecting exceptional outcomes for important meetings require the ultimate in communicating. Consistent attention to detail in all forms of communication will result in intelligent communications, which in turn lends toward events exceeding expectations. ★



IN MEMORY OF SHANNON PAVWOSKI-PERRY



Shannon Pavwoski-Perry lost her battle with cancer October 27, 2007. She died peacefully at home with her family by her side. Shannon was a 15-year breast cancer survivor. She was a planner member of the SGMP Michigan Chapter and was an active member and former President. In 2006 she married Tim Perry (SGMP Michigan and former President). Shannon was a wonderful person and a great friend to everyone. She will be greatly missed. ★

SUPPLIER NEWS

Leanne Hallisey with the Omni Hotels Dallas Global Sales Office was awarded a 2007 Sales Achievement Award for achieving the highest percentage over her goal for all of the Global Sales Offices.



Carissa Smith with the Omni Austin Hotel Downtown was awarded as Omni Hotels 2007 Director of Sales of the Year.

Todd and Lili Larson (Radison Hotel and Suites Austin Town Lake) are proud parents of Michael Peter Larson, 7 lbs. 12 oz. He was born on April 9, 2008 at 1:45 a.m.



Reuben and Connie Ramos (Homewood Suites by Hilton) and family welcomed (Princess) Victoria Rose Ramos on December 14, 2007. She weighed 5 lbs 14 oz and 19 inches long. Miss Victoria had a milestone moment already and turned over for the first time Friday, April 25, 2008. ★

UPCOMING NEWS



Next quarter, we will feature signature dishes from our members — both planners and suppliers. If your hotel has a signature dish, please submit the recipe (photo optional). Please include name of the chef and restaurant. Recipes may be submitted to Linda Jackson at linda.jackson@tabc.state.tx.us ★

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Discover our warm hospitality and experience our excellent service.

It's a little part of Texas on the map, but a whole lot of hospitable warmth and festive spirit all decked out in culture. This is Laredo, the destination that offers meeting planners a wide array of newly expanded accommodations options and meeting facilities coupled with personalized service from the Laredo Convention and Visitors Bureau (LCVB).

The LCVB is committed to offering everything you need for a successful meeting or event: hotel rates, site inspections, registration support, customized itineraries, entertainment options, transportation coordination, local speakers, superior service, and the warm hospitality for which Laredo is famous.

Regardless of the size of your event or needs, our knowledgeable staff will make your job easier. We provide professional complimentary services to the meeting coordinator to insure that any conference, group tour, or event takes place in Laredo is a success from the planning stages through its completion.

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.

Ramon Hernandez, Marketing manager
956.794.1711

Laredo

Gateway To Mexico!



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

May 8, 2008 — Chapter Meeting

Membership Has Its Benefits . . . What Are They?

Hilton Garden Inn
500 N. IH 35, Austin

*Sponsored by Hilton Garden Inn, Holiday Inn
Emerald Beach and Corpus Christi CVB*

June 5, 2008 — Chapter Meeting

What Are You Doing? – Hotel Trends

Speaker: Scott Joslove, President/CEO PHMA

Holiday Inn Town Lake
20 N. IH 35, Austin

**June 11-14, 2008 — SGMP National
Conference**

SGMP 2008 Annual Education Conference
Hilton Anatole, Dallas

July 10, 2008 — Silent Auction

Silent Auction and Volunteer of the Year Award

Crowne Plaza Hotel
6121 N. IH 35, Austin

July 31-August 3, 2008 — Chapter Retreat

SGMP TLSCC and Houston Gulf Coast Boot Camp

Hilton NASA Clear Lake
(www.houstonnasaclearlake.hilton.com)
3000 NASA Parkway, Houston



SGMP National

Society of Government Meeting Professionals

www.sgmp.org

SGMP Mission Statement

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

Local Chapter Information

Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter

www.sgmpaustin.org

Chapter Vision Statement

*Meeting professionals boldly leading the way in education,
effective communication, and efficiency in government
meetings and conferences.*



Society of Government Meeting Professionals

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