



METROPLEX CHAPTER CURRENT

DECEMBER 1980

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Planners Plight and Plea

Our November meeting was a most interesting affair. The program, you will recall, was on Contracts, and there was a panel of mighty experts elevated up front surrounded by some member "experts" with mighty elevated



GREG ELAM

views. Microphones were placed around the room to make places for questioners to stand (since most questioners didn't need the microphones to be heard). A rather strong repartee developed...with each side acknowledging some slight flaw while defending their primary mission. Several have said it was their best meeting ever.

All of this no doubt will be covered by others elsewhere in this issue, but I've told it to set the stage to pontificate on a point of concern - as a planner. Since it really had no place in a debate on contractual arrangements, I have harboured it for more than a week. Now it must burst forth.

As a planner, I find one great annoyance that may surprise suppliers. Most of the suppliers I know are in sales. Sales situations tend to attract alert, sharp, pleasant people. I prefer that kind of person. I choose a facility (or service) because of my anticipated satisfaction as presented by the sales person I have negotiated with. That person has moved me from a position of interest to a place of commitment. Fine. Hurray for good sales people who satisfy my professional needs. But you see, that isn't the end but just the beginning. Now that I know where (or what) I will spend my Company's money on, my fulfillment of the mission has just begun. I must successfully do the job.

The plight of a planner is that frequently the sales person is not involved in the "doing" - in the execution of the meeting (or service). Other people do it. That is fine if all goes well. But inevitably the customer (me) runs into some problem. Every place does have its own procedures and own peck-order of responsibilities. How come I have to fight these battles (when they develop)? That is where my "plea" comes in. Supplier sales people need to remain involved - at least in my case. I buy based on an anticipated result **and** because of a sales person who has gained my confidence to achieve that result. Don't desert me to others on the staff. Help me cut through problems, steer me around obstacles. I don't care what the rules say - I bought a sales person's promise and I want their help in fulfilling it. You say you do that. Many do.



Immediate past President of MPI, Charlotte St. Martin of the Loews Anatole and Current President, Greg Elam of Great American Reserve, enjoy a drink before the meeting at the Double Tree Inn.

But, my friend, a growing number do not. Some say "sales is sales" and then the inside team takes over. That is fine with me provided the sales person has now moved to my team. I won't belabor the point. I know that no reader is guilty of such conduct, but my plight is that I must do my job from beginning to end. I want my supplier to do so also.

That reminds me of a story, naturally. In olden days - I mean real olden days - one of the big events of a village was when the wise old Oracle would journey out of the hills to the village square to answer questions. People would line up to have their problems solved. In this one village there was a young punk-type person practicing the art of harassing his elders. He decided to show up the Oracle. He told his friend punk (punk friend?) that he was going to put a small bird in his cupped hands so that only the tail feathers would show. He was going to ask the old fool if the bird was dead or alive.

If the answer was "dead" he'd open his hands and let it fly off. If the answer was "alive" he would use his strong hands to crush the bird dead. He was confident that he'd embarrass the man from the hills.

Finally, his turn came and he held his hands in front of the Oracle and, with a sneer he asked, "Old wise one. I hold a bird before you. Is it alive or is it dead?"

The gentle man looked first at the powerful fists then at the mischievous face and he answered, "My son, you hold the answer in your hands."

Sales people do too.

Look for MPIInformation column next month.



Anne Lawrence of the Adolphus Hotel and Debra Senft of Thomas Promotional Agency enjoy the chance to visit at the Double Tree Inn.



This happy group of planners include Rick Alexander of Mostek, Marilyn McGuire of Texas Credit Union League, Bruce Jaster with UCC and Pat King of the Texas Society of CPA's.



Double Tree Inn provided a lavish display of hors d'oeuvres for the cocktail reception before the dinner and program. James Harrell of Ray Bloch Productions and Steve Parker of Union Bankers are ready for the tasting.



Look who just walked in the door! If Mike Stajdel of the Fairmount and Ron Trammell of Mary Kay Cosmetics don't know, it won't be long before they do.

PROGRAMS AND EDUCATION

by Tony DiRaimondo

What a meeting!!! From the response I received that evening, everyone enjoyed the program on contracts and cancellations. You couldn't identify one single area that was most agreeable, disagreeable, popular, or universally accepted.

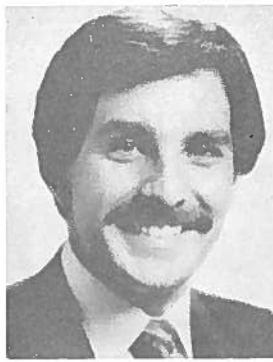
However, we do know that this is a two edged sword. If contracts are going to be used throughout our industry in the future, they are going to call for protection for both parties. This is not to say that we have accepted the "coming of contracts" (there are still many of us who are opposed to them). The conversation was spirited and those contributing offered a wide spectrum of opinions. A special note of thanks goes out to our speakers: Melvin Douglas, Mike Diamond, and Terry Townsend (due to a last minute emergency, Randy Kerfoot had to leave Dallas). We also want to thank the entire staff of the Doubletree Inn for an excellent reception and dinner.

There is a change in our program schedule. Our December meeting will be held on Tuesday, the 16th, at 11:30 a.m. at Wall's of Dallas, located at the Willow Creek Shopping Center on Walnut Hill and Central Expressway. The program will be on Verbal Communications, developed and presented by Pauline Graivier. For additional information, please see the back page.

Looking ahead to the new year, the January 22nd meeting will be on "Dealing With Medical Emergencies". Special concentration will be placed on Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). An optional four hour follow-up course will be offered following the luncheon. Attendance at the optional portion of the program will definitely be limited to 10-12 persons, so if you're interested, sign up early. The February meeting will be on "Trade Shows and Exhibits"; How to organize them and what happens next. As an exhibitor, what is expected of you and what are you expected **not** to do. Still to come in 1981: Airlines, Golf and Tennis Tournaments, Idea Fair, Theme Parties, and any subject deemed "hot" or critical to our industry. Our "New Planner" institute is scheduled for Tuesday, March 3rd, at the Loews Anatole. The program **will not** be in conjunction with a monthly meeting. It will last from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and will concentrate on basics and intermediate subjects. While some of our new planners will want to take part, the program is being geared for those who aren't full time planners, who are "first time or occasional" planners, or secretaries and administrative assistants who ultimately do the majority of the work. There will be a registration fee, and to control the quality of instruction, attendance will be limited. All members, but especially suppliers, are asked to submit to Harmon Hodge the name of one or two persons that you work with who are potential candidates for this type of class.

EDITORIAL COMMENT:

At our last meeting, we had a considerable number of out of town guests, which indicated that our advance promotion was somewhat successful. We also had a very good representation from our suppliers. We also had a total of 15 meeting planners out of a total attendance of 115. Included in the 15 meeting planners, were our President, three planner members of the program committee, one of the speakers, two past officers of the Chapter, and eight other planner members. I applaud the planners who have come regularly and those that come when



Tony DiRaimondo



Guest speaker for the December 16th Metroplex Chapter Meeting is our own Pauline Graivier of Verbal Communications, Inc. Remember that this meeting is on a Tuesday - not a Thursday. Lunch - not dinner. At Walls on Central at Walnut Hill Lane - not on Preston Road.

they can. What I am curious about is "where are the rest of the planners"? I am extremely proud of the three planners and two suppliers who make up the program committee, for their diligence and tenacity in coming up with meaningful and timely programs. If the reason for your non-attendance is programming, timing, location, personal conflict, or whatever, please let me know.

In a private conversation after our last meeting, it was told to me, by a very reliable source, that several planners stayed away from our last meeting because of the subject (contracts and cancellations). "The whole idea of contracts is infuriating. I prefer to work with hotels where a man's word means more than a contract", he said. Despite the deliberate false impression I gave at the meeting, I agree 100%. I don't want to see contracts come into our business any more than we already have. But I should be damned if I boycott an open discussion on the subject because it offends me. We are the professionals in the meeting planning industry. It is up to us to identify the problem (if we have one), isolate the causes, and come up with a solution. I believe that the vast majority of those who attended the November 19th meeting came away with a better understanding of the other person's feelings.

To those who stayed away because of the "offensive" nature of the subject, you did a great disservice to your fellow planners and to the suppliers for not giving your opinions. But mostly, you did a great injustice to yourself because you failed to take the opportunity to grow.

Let me restate the original theme of this year's program committee: "We will not avoid controversy". We will seek controversial, meaningful, and timely subjects. Our business is not always peaches and cream and our programs won't always be pleasant. We have to understand all the aspects of our problems before we can deal with them.

DECEMBER METROPLEX CHAPTER MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, December 16, 1980

TIME: Cocktails: 11:30 a.m.
Lunch: 12:00 noon
Program: 12:45

PLACE: Wall's of Dallas in Willowcreek
Shopping Center, North Central Expwy.
at Walnut Hill Lane (across the free-
way from The Corners). Park near the
Sample Shop and follow green carpet.

COST: \$12.00/person, advance reservation
\$14.00/person with no advance reservation

PROGRAM: VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS
Pauline Graivier



We all acknowledge the fact that communication skills are vitally important. A Texas based firm, VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS, INC. has created a storm of excitement with a truly unique approach to this challenging topic. Our own Metroplex Chapter Member, Pauline Graivier, is co-owner and founder of Verbal Communications, Inc. Her seminars are presented in an informal atmosphere and will develop your awareness of the techniques of communications, allow you to practice them, and exercise the discipline necessary to assume control of various situations.

Verbal Communications' common-sense, practical communications ideas give people new insights into how to deal with each other, business associates, family and the community, through subjects such as speaking in terms others understand, feedback, patience, dealing with personal assets, and giving directions correctly.

It's a wonderful program. Don't miss it! **Tuesday, December 16 - Lunch**

MPI Metroplex Chapter
P.O. Box 25104
Dallas, Texas 75225

DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS: Friday - 5:00 - 12/12/80
Call: Teri Dres, 369-2354

Please make _____ Reservations for the December Metroplex Chapter Lunch. The following will attend:

_____ name

_____ company

_____ name

_____ company

If you make advance reservations, the cost for the lunch is \$12.00 and may be paid at the door. If you prefer, you can pre-pay by sending your check in the proper amount to MPI to be received by December 12th.