



# Current

SEPTEMBER, 1983

THE PROFESSIONAL  
SOCIETY FOR THOSE  
WHO MANAGE MEETINGS

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Jerry Swiggart*

Now that we all are back from our one month free of MPI (August vacation), please mark your planners and calendars to show more involvement in your DFW MPI Chapter this coming year.

Your new programming-education committee with VP Ellen Beckert's leadership will be putting together some exciting and educational programs for you. VP Brian Hile and his membership committee will be working on new ways to recruit new members plus retain current members. VP's LaTrelle Smart — Administration and Rosemary Hall — Finance and Paul Iacovino — Public Relations also will be working for you in their individual areas.

It is not too late for you to become involved with your MPI Chapter, other than attending a few meetings. Please call one of your new officers and volunteer to help on any of these committees. You are important to us, and we do need your involvement in everything we do.

Your monthly MPI board meetings are also open to the membership, and you are encouraged to attend. The board times are posted monthly in the newsletter plus in the meeting notice. Generally we meet 1½ hours before each regularly scheduled monthly Chapter meeting.

Thank all of you again for giving this year's slate of officers a chance to serve you and your Chapter. Let's all work together for a very successful year.



## JULY MEETING AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS RECAP

On July 28 your new 1983-1984 DFW MPI Chapter officers were installed. We all accepted the challenge the membership had given us through the election, plus the additional challenge given by our installation officer, Harmon Hodge. May we all always strive for excellence in all of our endeavors.

Many, many thanks go to everyone who had a part in making this past meeting a great success. We appreciated the host property, the Plaza of the Americas, for their arrangements, and truly elegant and excellent meal, with French service. Special thanks go to the Bauer Audio Visual staff, both in-plant and from the corporate level for their contribution to the A/V needs in equipment set-up and in showing that great all time Super

Sport II video, highlighting Team Texas and their victory. Thanks, Earl J. Bauer, Sr., for your A/V comments. (By the way, if anyone doesn't know who Team Texas is, and what they have done by now, they have been on vacation too long!)

Our evening's speaker was Mel Hosansky, Editor-in-Chief and Associate Publisher of MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS magazine. His subject was "Scope and Trends in the Meetings Market." Mel's comments were very timely, and touched on areas such as continuing education, the world of the businesswoman plus the woman meeting planner, teleconferencing, and many others. His remarks were very well received and appreciated by our members and guests.



*New Officers pictured above from left to right:  
Front Row: Paul Iacovino, Brian Hile, Lesley Meyer, Sally Gibbons, Ellen Beckert, and LaTrelle Smart  
Back Row: Harmon Hodge, Jerry Swiggart, Rosemary Hall, Virginia Smock, Marilyn McGuire and Bill Beaty*

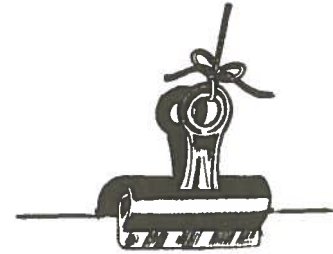
# FIRST WEEKEND JOINT RETREAT

November 11-13, 1983

Mark your calendars and join the Houston and Hill Country Chapters for an educational and fun-filled weekend at Woodcreek Resort in Wimberly, deep in the Texas Hill Country. You won't want to miss the social activities starting on Friday evening with a cocktail reception and ending Saturday with a barbecue and country western dancing.

Your package includes the opportunity to stay over Sunday and take advantage of all the recreational facilities. The beautiful setting at Woodcreek is the perfect place to combine fun and learning, plus being able to get acquainted with members of the other Texas Chapters.

We have planned Workshops on Saturday with topics to interest everyone: "How to Stretch Your Food & Beverage Budget", "Promotion: The Key to a Successful Convention or Trip", "How to Negotiate Hotel Contracts in the 80's", "How Incentives Work" and "Regional Sales Offices—What They Can Do For You".



Return your registration form NOW! You may bring your spouse — in fact we hope you do. You won't want to miss this event!

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## Meeting planners get replies with One Call

A new Dallas-based subsidiary of Western Union is making the first large-scale effort to apply modern computer and telecommunications technology to the age-old problem of planning meetings and conventions. "One Call," the name of the innovative service, is all it will take, according to the president of the new firm, for planners using the service to gather bids on air travel, rental cars and hotel accommodations from dozens of suppliers.

"For meeting planners, One Call saves enormous time and trouble in assembling the necessary information on which to make decisions regarding arrangements," says John Richard, a former Braniff International executive named to head the subsidiary, Western Union Travel Industry Services Inc.

He adds, "For suppliers, it means a vast information network to reach prospective customers and thus generate additional sales leads."

It works like this: a meeting planner calls the One Call office on Arapaho Road and gives them the specifications for a particular meeting. These will include such things as number of rooms, points of departure for air travel, ground transportation needs and type of meeting facilities.

One Call then punches the specifications into its computer which transmits them through Western Union's communications network to hotels, airlines and car rental agencies. Richard says they will place dedicated computer terminals in large customers such as major hotel chains. Smaller outfits may be able to access the

One Call network through their computerized accounting or word processing setups.

The vendors will be able to place bids to match the specifications received from the meeting planners via One Call. Bids are due back within five days, after which One Call assembles them and sends the meeting planner a mailgram.

Richard says his company will neither sort the bids nor make any sort of recommendations. That's up to the planner, he stresses. One Call simply acts as a communications link between the planners and their suppliers.

Since the service was unveiled at the end of April, Richard and his staff — also consisting mostly of former Braniff employees — have been concentrating on lining up hotels to act as suppliers. So far, they have signed on about 40, including the Hilton, Sheraton, Amfac and Westin chains.

The advantage to the hotels and, later, the car renters and airlines is that they don't have to sit around waiting for the phone to ring with a call from a meeting planner, Richard says. "This way they are guaranteed a shot at it," says Richard.

The service first became fully operational June 23, and Richard says they have just begun marketing it to planners and travel agents. However, a sampling of Dallas/Fort Worth members of the industry revealed virtually no awareness of its existence as yet.

An exception was Sally Gibbons who was in on the planning for One Call. "I think it's going to work," predicts Gibbons. The speed of the electronic communications network represents an important advance over the current system of publishing specifications for future meetings

in trade journals, she says. That will make it especially valuable for gatherings which have to be planned on short notice.

Richard says they are aiming the service at meetings of 50 to 150 people, which have to be put together in less than six or eight weeks. "Those that are major corporation meetings that are planned well in advance probably don't need this sort of thing," he notes.

One Call will be supported by fees to suppliers and planners using the service. Planners will be charged a one-time, \$75 sign-up fee. Then, every time they use the service they will be charged from \$10 to \$25. Curiously, planners will be charged more if they just want one service, such as ground transportation, and less if they want all three types.

Suppliers will pay only when they are selected by a planner, Richard says. Until they are chosen, they submit bids free. Fees are arranged according to the type of supplier. Airlines pay \$75 each time they are chosen, hotels \$50 and car renters \$25.

The fees are described as "nominal" by One Call, and planners contacted seemed to agree. One noted that the entire fee could easily be spent on long-distance calls to find accommodations — and without contacting as many suppliers. Also, since it just takes one call to Richard and his staff, the planner spends less time per meeting.

Because of the way One Call tends to simplify the planning process, one likely effect will be to encourage more travel agents to enter the meeting planning field. That may not be welcomed by specialized meeting planners, but Richard notes that it will just mean more business for him.

— Mark Henricks

# YOUR DIME OR MINE?

## Sales Advice From A Planner

by Judith Houghton

After over a year of doing the "Food For Thought" column, I thought it might be best to let some others share their thoughts along these lines and for me to address a variety of other subjects that might be of interest to you in our industry.

Since "Food For Thought" is being mainly directed to Planners, I am taking this opportunity to address the Suppliers on this, the first of my new series.

Ask any Planner and they will tell you that I am not exaggerating when I say I get anywhere from ten to twenty calls a day from various suppliers — audio visual houses, speakers bureaus, hotels, hotels, and hotels. We like to do a good P.R. job for our companies or associations and get back to you as soon as possible, even if we know your services won't fit our needs or we have already contracted someone else with duplicate services.

We try, in between the myriad of calls we must handle in the performance of our work, to attempt to return all those calls you leave, and some days there are literally stacks. We're frequently out of town and return to find piles of "Called While You Were Out" slips — mostly long distance — all marked "Please call".

Here's my point. It is highly unusual for someone to ask that the call be returned collect or to inquire as to when might be a better time to call back. In so many cases I know we can not take advantage of the services that will be offered and I feel that I am being unfair to my company spending their money returning phone calls that will be unproductive.

You spend lots of money on handsome brochures and clever promotional items. but when you ask me to pay to hear your sales "pitch" — well —

I would really rather spend those several hundred dollars I would save taking advantage of your services and products. Because we all live in the same area, it doesn't apply so much to those of us in the same Chapter, but it's something to think about when you make those long distance calls to a prospective customer.

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

## COFFEE TEA OR BIRCHERMUESLI (beer-come-mes-leu)

by Ken Kalish

"Monday 8:00 am — coffee — replenish at 9:00 am — break at 10:30 am — lunch — 12:00 noon — break 2:30 pm — repeat same schedule on Tuesday and Wednesday."

This scenario seems to be fairly standard for group meetings, whether corporate or association, in many hotels across the country.

The effects of coffee on our bodies is constantly being questioned, from causing hyper-tension to the possibility that it can promote cancer. In the meeting room environment, massive doses of caffeine can create nervousness and upset stomachs, often disrupting a meeting as attendees excuse themselves to "powder their noses".

The professional meeting planner and hotelier can make available other break-time items which will be a change from the standard refreshment scene and might possibly promote a better diet plan.

In speaking with the Hyatt Regency's Executive Chef, Rene Mettler, whose background in many fine hotels in the U.S. and Europe is well known, I discovered some ideas which are definitely worth stomaching!

Morning breaks, Chef Mettler suggests, could include fresh fruit juices, international teas, such as mint, Kamille, Rose Hip and other natural teas. Birchermuesli, a type of cereal made with hot or cold oatmeal, fresh fruit, cream or yogurt, honey, and nuts, gets your attendees off to an excellent start.

An aerobics theme break with calisthenics and a health club's stationary bicycle is a simple and inexpensive way to promote better concentration and better thinking power from the meeting attendees.

Afternoon breaks might include Virgin Bloody Mary's, granola bars, and health shakes (1 raw egg, milk, ice cubes, & chopped fruit). Fresh fruit juices with soda water, sherbert and ice are also very refreshing.

Chef Mettler likes to create memorable experiences for the guests, which in turn will keep the attendees anxiously awaiting the next program and might start us thinking about saying "no" to the question "Do you want a second cup?"



Home Interiors and Gifts hopes to return to Dallas in 1985 but takes its seminar on the road in 1984 for a series of regional seminars and display. After all, not every year is an anniversary event.

# HOME INTERIORS AND GIFTS - A TEXAS SIZE ANNIVERSARY

by Penny Yast

Last March, 607 people served filet mignon dinners and 2,000 special anniversary cakes to 15,000 Home Interiors and Gifts sales people for their 25th Anniversary Celebration at the Dallas Convention Center.

When planning began in September for this anniversary event, Mary Crowley, president & founder of the Dallas based company, told her staff that "for the 25th, I want not just a seminar, but a celebration." And so in December, 4 staff members, guided by Don Breedlove, vice president for operations, went into a full time planning mode.

Home Interiors and Gifts has held large meetings in the past, but the celebration theme of this year's event meant hosting the 15,000 person banquet, plus feeding brunch to the same 15,000 people on 2 consecutive days in 4 assigned shifts, plus issuing tickets to each attendee redeemable for a hamburger, drink and fries at a '50's "Hamburger Haven." Home Interiors and Gifts also hosted two private concerts for the group. After dinner at the Convention Center, attendees were bussed to Reunion Arena to hear B. J. Thomas on one night and Barbara Mandrell on the next. Prior to the concert however, the group attended a specially produced daytime show at Reunion Arena which highlighted the history of the company and featured archival photos of the officers of the company "back then", with music, dancers, and live entertain-

ment following the '50's theme. Nearly all of the 225,000 sq. ft. of the lower exhibit hall at the Convention Center was filled with exhibits. The wholesalers who supply the products sold by the Home Interiors and Gifts sales force set booths to display new lines, production techniques, and home decor ideas using their products. Attendees were provided with cold drinks, popcorn, and live music while browsing the area.

Many areas of planning were delegated to various contractors. Food service was coordinated by a free lance consultant, although the catering was handled by 3 separate companies. Entertainment was produced by various lighting, music, and talent contractors, under the supervision of Don Carter, Home Interiors and Gifts executive vice president, (and owner of Dallas' NBA Mavericks team.) Other major contractors included a convention decorator, an electrical contractor experienced in convention work, a convention florist, and a security service. In fact, the list of "Key contacts" for the event was a list of 29 names.

All but 2,200 of the 15,000 attendees were responsible for their own travel and hotel bills, and there were no registration or other fees collected by the company. A special commemorative program was printed by Home Interiors and Gifts for the event and all the staff and workers wore specially printed T-shirts throughout the "celebration."

# SEPTEMBER MEETING

AT "NEW" MELROSE HOTEL . . .

*DON'T MISS IT!*

Our first chapter program of the 1983/84 year promises to be unique, educational, fun — and definitely not boring!

Matt Weinstein, Ph.D., and President of Playfair, Inc., will show us how to "Banish Boredom From Business" with "Laughter and Play in the Workplace".

Employee stress, tension, and stagnation are of increasing concern to all types of businesses. Matt will bring us some practical ways to incorporate playfulness in business life to help improve the creativity — and physical health — of everyone we deal with. He can also give us some useful tools to help break the ice at meetings and encourage more attendee involvement.

We will be meeting at the newly renovated Melrose Hotel for cocktails, lunch and program on Thursday, September 22. The Melrose staff has extended an open invitation for anyone who wants to tour the property beforehand at 11:00 AM, and afterwards, at 1:30 PM — they are also the gracious hosts of our cocktails, beginning at 11:30 AM.

Plan to come learn — and laugh — with us! For reservations, call Leslie Radock at 429-3803, extension 1281.



Dallas/Fort Worth Chapter MPI  
P.O. Box 402102  
Dallas, Texas 75240



TEXAS "SUPERSTARS" #1  
AT "SUPERSPORTS"

"If it can work for the Egyptians, it can work for us." That is Jerry Swiggart's explanation for the unusual pose struck by the Texans competing in the Second Annual "Supersports" Program at the MPI Annual Meeting. The photo above shows our team, the undisputed champions of the 1983 "Supersports" program. Some of the faces you don't recognize belong to our associates in Houston, Austin, and San Antonio. This was an all-Texas effort! Congratulations to all who participated.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Mark your calendar now — we've got some surprises in store!

Thursday, October 27 — Dinner (TBA)

Tuesday, November 22 — Luncheon (TBA)

Monday, December 12 — Christmas Gala (TBA)

## OFFICERS

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For information or editorial  
contributions, write to

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or call.

## — MEMBERSHIP UP-DATE —

Mark your records to show that our immediate past President, Sally Gibbons, has ended her sabbatical and now is calling the Anatole Hotel her new home. When asked what will she be doing, she responded, "Just anything they tell me to do." As a Sales Manager, Sally started her new job August 29, 1983. Congratulations Sal.

600-228-9000  
Gets You Hyatt  
World Wide and Toll Free

