

MPI

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CURRENT

Meeting Professionals International

February 1997

Dallas/Fort Worth Chapter

Chapter also Cited for Excellence in Education

MPI D/FW Named 'Chapter of the Year' for a Record-Breaking Fourth Time!

By Gracie Hilton
The Write Stuff
CURRENT Editor

Chapter of the Year! One more time—for the *fourth* time! A history-making accolade! Hurrah!

The Dallas/Fort Worth Chapter of MPI again made history at the 1997 Professional Education Conference-North America (PEC-NA) when it received the coveted Chapter of the Year award for the *fourth* time.

The meeting took place in San Francisco last month.

The Chapter of the Year Award is the highest honor bestowed on a local chapter by the international MPI organization.

When MPI D/FW won the award in



A Presidential Trio Celebrates
MPI D/FW Chapter Presidents Diane Smith, CMP (1994-95); Phyllis Firebaugh, CMP (1995-96); and Mary Lynn Novelli, CMP (1996-97) display the "Chapter of the Year" award banner.

1994—after back-to-back awards in 1989 and 1990—it was the first time any MPI chapter had earned the Chapter of the Year Award three times.

In addition to Chapter of the Year, Dallas/Fort Worth also walked away with the Award of Excellence for Education. Creative, innovative educational programming—34 educational programs in addition to monthly chapter meetings—was cited in this special recognition.

Dallas/Fort Worth Chapter President Mary Lynn Novelli, CMP (Sterling Hotels and Resorts) and Immediate Past President Phyllis Firebaugh, CMP (SEI Incentives) accepted the awards on behalf of the D/FW MPI Chapter.

"A fourth Chapter of the Year Award is another record-breaker," said Novelli, "and what a tribute to the leadership of Phyllis Firebaugh and her board and committees!"

The D/FW Chapter was honored in the category of chapters with more than 250 members. The Ottawa, Ontario, Canada Chapter is Chapter of the Year for

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The Kids Charity Ball
March 22

Lights! Camera! AUCTION!
see page 18

CURRENT MPI

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Upcoming MPI Events

February 18, Tuesday
TKCB Committee Chairs
Great Hall, 6:00 p.m.
TKCB Committee Chairs
Great Hall, 7:30 p.m.

February 20, Thursday
Program Committee Meeting
Ft Worth Caravan of Dreams
5:30 p.m.

February 22, Saturday
Community Service Project
Bryan's House
8:30 a.m.

February 24, Monday
Public Relations/Marketing Committee
IGNITION! 201 Regal Row
6:00 p.m.

February 25, Tuesday
Education Committee Meeting
Annuity Bd. 2401 Cedar Springs
11:30 am to 12:30 pm

February 26, Wednesday
Texas Legislative Action Day

February 27, Thursday
MPI D/FW Monthly Meeting
Ft Worth Caravan of Dreams
6:00 p.m.

March 6, Thursday
Mentor Committee Meeting
Sunbelt Motivation & Travel
12:00 p.m.

March 6, Thursday
Legislative Action Day
Washington DC

March 11, Tuesday
Membership Committee Meeting
Grand Kempinski
5:30 p.m.

March 12, Wednesday
D/FW MPI Board Meeting
5:00 p.m.

March 14, Friday
April *CURRENT* deadline
copy due by 5 p.m.

March 18, Tuesday
TKCB Committee Chairs
Great Hall
6:00 p.m.

March 20, Thursday
Program Committee Meeting
Sheraton Park Central
5:30 p.m.

March 22, Saturday
The Kids Charity Ball
Great Hall

March 24, Monday
Public Relations/Marketing Committee
IGNITION! 201 Regal Row
6:00 p.m.

March 25, Tuesday
Education Committee Meeting
Annuity Bd 2401 Cedar Springs
11:30 a.m.

March 26, Wednesday
PO*D Chairs Committee Meeting
6:00 p.m.

March 27, Thursday
D/FW MPI Monthly Meeting
Sheraton Park Central
11:30 a.m.

April 3, Thursday
Mentor Committee Meeting
Sunbelt Motivation
12:00 p.m.

April 8, Tuesday
Membership Committee Meeting
Grand Kempinski
5:30 p.m.

April 9, Wednesday
D/FW MPI Board Meeting
5:00 p.m.

April 17, Thursday
Program Committee Meeting
Downtown Hyatt Regency
5:30 p.m.

April 18, Friday
May *CURRENT* deadline
copy due by 5 p.m.

Calendar compiled by **O.D. O'Donnell** (Nightlife Talent & Management Agency), 214-691-4417.

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Chapter of the Year Award

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chapters with fewer than 250 members.

Chapter of the Year Awards are based on a recommendation from the Council of Chapter Presidents to the International Awards Committee.

Spokespersons from the international headquarters of MPI said the D/FW Chapter is MPI's 1995-96 Chapter of the Year because of its "excellence across the board."

Chapter of the Year judging criteria is based on: Administration (10%); Communications, Marketing & Public Relations (15%); Education (40%); Membership Growth and Retention (25%) and Special Projects (10%).

Goals Reached and Exceeded

"I have such confidence in the awards process because each category is judged separately and not even the committee knows who will win Chapter of the Year until they meet to tally their separate areas," said 1995-96 President Firebaugh.

Competing chapters submitted a "Chapter of the Year" book, detailing the chapter's goals, projects and activities. This project, chaired by MPI D/FW Vice President of Public Relations and Marketing Dana Nickerson, CMP (Square One Productions) was lauded by Gary Boyler, MPI's international director of marketing, for documenting how stated goals were met.

Firebaugh admits that areas of expertise

and individuals worthy of accolades are "too numerous to detail in this "just in time to make the February *CURRENT* deadline."

Her general observations included comments about educational programming, retention and special projects.

The chapter's successful Technology Institute, two "Walk a While in My Shoes" programs, a multiplicity of breakfast and luncheon seminars, plus a wide variety of executive workshops and CMP study opportunities were cited as key to the award. Specially noted was the Mentor Program, which served as a model for MPI International—a program adopted by a number of other chapters.

"The D/FW Chapter recruited 209 new members, held a 73.25% retention rate, and a 27% growth in program participation," Firebaugh said.

"Texas Cookin'," the chapter cookbook, provided a unique amenity for PEC attendees, and profits allowed the chapter to contribute \$5,000 to the MPI Foundation. This special project also generated funds for chapter programming.

Firebaugh noted that hosting the 1995 PEC in Dallas generated a lot of support and participation in committees.

Also cited was the chapter's community service. The chapter raised a record-breaking \$70,000 for children's charities at The Kids Charity Ball, an event that was nominated as "Best Fundraiser in 1996" by *Special Events Magazine* at Special Event '97 in Las Vegas, NV.



MPI D/FW Chapter members attending the PEC-NA meeting in San Francisco gather to celebrate the chapter's record-breaking fourth Chapter of the Year award.

MPI

MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL®

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Meeting Professionals International is the world's largest association of meetings professionals with more than 14,000 members in 44 countries and 56 chapters and one club. MPI's mission is to provide educational opportunities and recognition for those in the meetings industry. The association is committed to excellence in meetings, continuous international growth, research, a strong chapter network and high ethical standards.

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February Meeting Highlights

Innovative Networking: Put Your Network to Work!

By Gerry Reid
Gerry Reid Speaking

Two reasons to be an MPI member:
Education and Networking

Two reasons to attend the February
D/FW Chapter meeting:
**Hands-on
Education and Networking!**

Get ready for an action-packed, fun-filled, casual-dress evening on Thursday, Feb. 27. Come visit the exciting and colorful Sundance Square, the Caravan of Dreams, Etta's Place and the Flying Saucer, all located right in the heart of downtown Fort Worth, Texas.



Scott Hawkins
*Personal
Excellence, Inc.*

Action-Packed

In a dynamic, information-filled session called "**Innovative Networking**," Scott Hawkins will lead us through the

essential steps of power networking.

Learn new skills and strategies for successful networking and implement them immediately! This session promises to energize our self-confidence and motivate us to take action.

Scott Hawkins, professional speaker, business coach, attorney and owner of four successful businesses, is CEO of Personal Excellence, Inc., a national company that specializes in assisting individuals, associations and corporations to achieve excellence. Based in Dallas, Scott teaches proven success strategies including how to improve business skills, enhance career opportunities and improve personal relationships.

Fun Filled!

Bus transportation, including on-board entertainment and activities, will be provided from Dallas, leaving from the Wyndham Anatole Hotel at 5:00 p.m. Buses will leave for the return trip at 9:10

continued on page 5

Innovative Networking in 7 Steps

By Scott Hawkins • Personal Excellence, Inc.

Would you like to attract new customers and increase your business? Would you like to become more successful quickly?

How do you do it? *Through innovative networking.*

This seven-step process will take your networking skills to the next level.

1. **Be friendly and smile**
2. **Ask great questions**
3. **Listen carefully**
4. **Make mental notes**
5. **Help others**
6. **Stay in touch**
7. **Get involved**

1. **Be friendly and smile.** When you meet someone, one of the best things you can do is extend your hand with a smile on your face.

2. **Ask great questions.** The best conversationalists and networkers are those who ask great questions. People enjoy talking to people who ask great questions—about subjects they are interested in! •“Tell me a little about your business.” •“Who is your ideal customer?” •“How can I help you with your business?”

3. **Listen carefully.** Once you have asked a question, close your mouth and listen carefully to the answer. Lean forward, make eye contact and listen intently. People value a listener. Pause briefly after someone stops talking before replying. This takes some discipline, but shows that you have a high degree of respect for what the other person is saying.

4. **Make mental notes.** While listening intently, make mental notes. Remember what you hear! Exchange business cards; after your conversation, jot some notes on the back of that business card. The next time you talk to that person be sure to refer to information previously discussed. Are you pleased—pleasantly surprised—when someone remembers to ask you about an important event or situation in your life? Most people are flattered when this happens.

5. **Help others.** When you help others get what they want, they will automatically want to help you too. This is called the law of reciprocity. The more people you help in MPI, the more you will get out of this great organization!

6. **Stay in touch.** Networking is a process of developing relationships. It's important to grow and nurture those relationships. Use personal notes to keep in touch. When you hear something great about someone you know, take a minute to call them or, better yet, write them a hand-written note. A phone call lasts for a minute but a personal note lasts forever. Send holiday cards to let people know you care about them and are thinking of them. Be creative and think of fun ways to keep in touch.

7. **Get involved.** Remember ROI, “Return on Involvement.” If you are interested in expanding and growing your business through MPI relationships, get involved and join some committees. The more energy you put into an organization, the more you will get out of it. Remember the law of reciprocity! You cannot simply join MPI and expect the business will start rolling in the door. You must first get involved... then the rewards, new business and new friendships you will develop will be greater than you can imagine.

February Meeting

continued from page 4

p.m., arriving in Dallas at 10:00 p.m. A post-event bus will depart Fort Worth between 10:00 and 10:30 p.m., arriving at Loew's Anatole in Dallas between 11:00 and 11:30 p.m.

The reception will be at 6:00 p.m. in the library at **Etta's Place**, adjoining the Caravan of Dreams. New member orientation will also be at 6:00 p.m. in the Caravan of Dreams theater.

Casual-Dress: Get rid of that suit! Off with the tie! Come to this meeting ready to relax while you learn and network. Be prepared to "get down" and "get personal" while you enjoy yourself, Fort Worth style.

A buffet-style dinner will be served at the **Caravan of Dreams** at 7:00 p.m. The casual atmosphere of this Fort Worth landmark is ideal for our evening of networking. The post-event gathering will be held at **The Flying Saucer Draught Beer Emporium**, situated in the oldest building in downtown Fort Worth.

Then, cap off this exciting event and enjoy even more of what downtown Fort Worth has to offer on Friday, by spending the night at Etta's! A special MPI room rate is available for Thursday evening, Feb. 27. Call 817-654-0267 for reservations.

Members of the February meeting committee look forward to seeing you in Fort Worth! We are: Melanie Arguello (Fort Worth Convention and Visitors Bureau), Sherri Cook, CMP (Sherri Cook and Associates), Gerry Reid (Gerry Reid Speaking), Merriann Skinner (Texas Instruments) and Tiffany Vinyard (Yellow Rose Tours).

Chapter Meeting Reservation & Attendance Policy

Registration fees will be collected at the door; advance payments are not accepted. If paying by check, please have check completed before approaching registration table. Reservations must be made by RSVP deadline for advance registration fee to apply. Late reservations and walk-ins will be accepted on a SPACE AVAILABLE basis. Cancellations must be made by the RSVP deadline. **No-shows will be billed.** Members are responsible for "no-show" charges for their guests. Guests are limited to attending three meetings per year (spouses are an exception).

MPI

MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL®

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February D/FW Chapter Meeting

"Innovative Networking"

Thursday, February 27

Caravan of Dreams

312 Houston Street • Sundance Square
Fort Worth, Texas • 817-877-3000

5:00 p.m. Buses leave the Wyndham Anatole Hotel in Dallas

6:00 p.m. Registration—Etta's Place

6:00 p.m. New Member Orientation—Caravan Theater

7:00 p.m. Dinner—Caravan of Dreams

7:30 p.m. Program—Caravan of Dreams

9:10 p.m. Buses depart for return to the Wyndham Anatole Hotel

9:15 p.m. Post-event—The Flying Saucer Draught Beer Emporium

10:30 p.m. Last bus departs for return to the Wyndham Anatole Hotel

—Complimentary Parking at the Worthington Hotel—

R.S.V.P. to Joe

by noon, Tuesday, Feb. 25

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Advance Registration \$28

Late Registration \$35

Guest Registration \$32

February Host Facilities

Caravan of Dreams

Situated at 3rd St. and Houston in downtown Fort Worth, Caravan of Dreams is one of the top music venues in the Southwest, drawing eclectic crowds from around the state . . . a perfect spot for an entire evening or an after-hours drink. The facility features live music and theater and includes a 480-seat concert venue, 216-seat auditorium which has a separate bar and studio, a "Grotto" bar on the roof where the actual bar is inside a "cave," and a rooftop patio that may be reserved for private functions. All areas may be rented for meetings, private parties and receptions.

Etta's Place

Adjacent to the Caravan of Dreams, Etta's Place is a full-service ten-room bed and breakfast inn offering personal attention, complimentary breakfast and quiet charm in the midst of Downtown Fort Worth.

The Flying Saucer Draught Beer Emporium

The Flying Saucer Draught Beer Emporium, 4th and Commerce in Fort Worth, features more than 300 hand-crafted brews from around the world and the "Wurst" food in Fort Worth. Private meeting space is available in Half Acre Hall.

The Worthington Hotel

Parking—complimentary valet parking—is available at the Worthington Hotel.

EDUCATION NEWS

TriPO⁴D Meeting at The Ballpark in Arlington Features Matyastik

By Joel Hueske
MPG* Meeting Planners Guide

"I have a dream..."

These famous words were spoken by two great people—the late Rev. Martin Luther King, standing on Capitol steps in Washington, D.C.; and Bill Matyastik (Business Interiors), at the Jan. 9 TriPO⁴D



Bill Matyastik
Business Interiors

breakfast meeting in the Diamond Club at the Ballpark in Arlington.

The meeting was attended by members of PO⁴Ds #4, #9 & #10.

When he was only eleven years old, Matyastik had a dream—to be the world's top ranked tennis player. His dream developed into a passion and he devoted his life to following his dream and ultimately spent two years competing on the professional tennis tour.

Matyastik's message was clear—"With-

out a dream, one cannot have a passion. Without a passion, one cannot achieve his potential."

His second message was, "Although I never was ranked #1 in the world, my life was *generously enriched* by following the dream." Matyastik tells us to be more concerned with the "journey" and less with the "destination."

The MPI members in attendance benefited from this outstanding program.

"I thought it was absolutely terrific, and a fabulous way to start the New Year. Matyastik related well to the audience and inspired us with his relevant story," said Marcy Roitman (Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau).

Matyastik, a member of MPI for two years, is employed as director of rentals for Business Interiors, and provides motivational talks using his "*Goal-Stepping Method*."

The PO⁴D program makes it possible for MPI D/FW Chapter members within certain geographical areas to meet for educational and networking opportunities.



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Hurry! The application deadline for the 1997 Summer CMP Examinations is March 24, 1997!

1997 SUMMER
EXAMINATION SCHEDULE

JUNE 21

Atlanta, GA	Orlando, FL
Boston, MA	Philadelphia, PA
Chicago, IL	San Diego, CA
Dallas, TX	San Francisco, CA
Florham Park, NJ	Seattle, WA
Orange Co., CA	St. Louis, MO
New York, NY	Toronto, ON
	Washington, DC

AUGUST 2
Baltimore, MD



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O
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CMP Study Sessions Set

The next series of CMP Study Group sessions are set for May 7, 14, 21, 28 and June 4 and 11 (Wednesdays). CMP University sessions will take place Saturday and Sunday, June 7-8

CMP Study Group sessions will take place at Hackberry Creek Country Club (1901 Royal Lane, Irving, Texas 75063), from 6-8 p.m. Cost is \$35.

CMP University sessions will take place at The Stoneleigh Hotel (2927 Maple Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75201), Saturday, 1-5 p.m. and Sunday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Cost is \$45.

Anticipate a March meeting date—to be announced—to review the CMP Program process. Guest speaker will be Colleen Albert Rickenbacher, CMP (Dallas CVB).

Questions? Call CMP Liaison Cyndi Martinez, CMP (The Stoneleigh Hotel), 214-871-7111.



Cyndi Martinez, CMP
The Stoneleigh Hotel

MPI D/FW Chapter Wins Award for Excellence in Education



Education Rules!

1996-97 V.P./Education Susie Carr, CMP (Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention); 1996-97 V.P./Education Greg Pynes (Hand and Associates); Charlotte Merrill Davis (Event Source Professionals), former v.p./education; and Michelle Carter (Wyndham Anatole Hotel), former v.p./programs, proudly display the MPI D/FW Chapter's Award of Excellence for Education. Read more about it in the cover story.

STAR of the Month

"Star of the Month" is a recognition program honoring chapter members for involvement in committees and special programs. All Stars of the Month are eligible for a special drawing for two educational scholarship awards to attend the MPI International Conference or other MPI educational opportunities.



Debbie Meyers
Bravo!
Entertainment

Debbie Meyers is the president of Bravo! Entertainment. A member of MPI since January 1993, she is an active member of several committees, including the Program Committee and The Kids Charity Ball Committee. Meyers chairs the Table Talk Committee, the chapter's monthly table host program.

To nominate a Star of the Month, please call
Paige Braun (Dallas Conventioneer), 214-691-8073.

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**President's Message
We did it again! D/FW is 'Chapter
of the Year' One More Time!**

We did it again—CHAPTER OF THE YEAR!

During MPI PEC-1997, the D/FW Chapter gained worldwide fame, once again, by winning the prestigious *Chapter of the Year* Award as well as the coveted **Special Award of Excellence for Education**. Achieving even one of these top two awards would be a dream come true for any of the 59 chapters and two clubs of MPI.



**Mary Lynn
Novelli, CMP**
*Sterling Hotels &
Resorts*
D/FW Chapter
President

Did you know this is the fourth time the D/FW Chapter has achieved this incredible honor and that MPI D/FW is the only chapter that has won this award more than two times? And combining this award with the Education Excellence Award, MPI's top priority in its mission statement, we clearly are the #1 Chapter in the World!

Please join me in congratulating Immediate Past President Phyllis Firebaugh, CMP (SEI Incentives); the 1995-1996 Board of Directors; Dana Nickerson, CMP (Square One Productions), chair and editor of the Chapter of the Year books, and all dedicated chapter members for a job well done!

Many D/FW Chapter members attended PEC and celebrated our great success. We all received many hugs and words of congratulations for our hard work and commitment to MPI and for being a leader and role model for other chapters. Phyllis and I were so proud to accept the awards on behalf of our chapter and want to thank you for this great honor and helping to make our dream and vision come true.

And now, it's time to get back to work with the same commitment and dedication that our D/FW Chapter has become known for and continue our **Focus on the Vision**. Please be sure to take the time to vote for the 1997-1998 Board.
—MLN

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chapter meeting?!**

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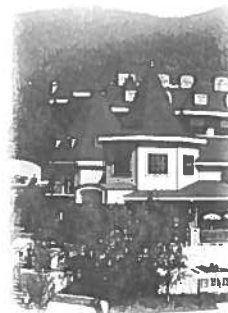
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January Meeting Highlights

Dallas Mayor Ron Kirk Addresses MPI, Encourages Industry Advocacy



Dallas Mayor **Ron Kirk** presents a proclamation to MPI D/FW President **Mary Lynn Novelli, CMP** (Sterling Hotels & Resorts). The proclamation (text at right) declared January 23, 1997 "Industry Advocacy Day" in Dallas.

**Photos by
Mark Lazarow Photography**

RIGHT: **Alison Brody** (Helms/Briscoe Performance Group, Inc.) was the excited winner of a fabulous trip for two to Calgary and the Canadian Rockies. The trip was provided by the "Canadian Partners," including **Diana Bergdahl**, sales manager, USA, Alberta Tourism Partnership.

**PROCLAMATION
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
City of Dallas, Dallas County**

WHERE AS Travel & Tourism is one of the fastest growing non-technical segments of the Global economy; and

WHERE AS the Meetings Industry represents a large component of the Global economy, and

WHERE AS the Meetings Industry is the single largest employer in the City of Dallas, and largest generator of visitors to the City and

WHERE AS the Meetings Industry reflects the diversity and international flavor of the City of Dallas and

WHERE AS the City of Dallas recognizes the contribution of the Meetings Industry to the dynamic nature of the City of Dallas quality of Life.

Now therefore, I, Ronald Kirk, Mayor of Dallas, and on behalf of the Dallas City Council, do hereby proclaim January 23, 1997 as Meetings Industry Advocacy Day in Dallas, Texas.





Dallas Mayor **Ron Kirk**, second from left, with MPI D/FW Chapter panelists **Phil Crouse** (Phillip C. Crouse & Associates), **Greg Pynes** (Hand & Associates) and **Steven Foster** (Gray Line of Dallas/Fort Worth). After Mayor Kirk's keynote speech, the panelists discussed the importance of MPI members taking an active role in industry advocacy.



Dallas Mayor **Ron Kirk** visits with MPI members during the pre-meeting reception.

Hall of Fame

Please salute the following companies and individuals for their contributions to the January meeting at the Wyndham Anatole Hotel:

Featured Speaker
MAYOR RON KIRK

Government Affairs
Town Hall Meeting Panelists
STEVEN G. FOSTER
Gray Line of Dallas/Fort Worth

GREG PYNES
Hand & Associates

PHIL CROUSE
Phillip C. Crouse & Associates

Facility, Reception,
Luncheon & Centerpieces
WYNDHAM ANATOLE HOTEL

PAT LUPSHA
General Manager

CHRISTY SARTORIUS
Director of Sales

BRETT KRAFFT
Director of Catering

WENDY EZERNACK
National Sales Manager

AV Services and Video Production
ROB KEATING
Intelecon Show Services

Event Photography/Videography
MARK LAZAROW
Mark Lazarow Photography

January Program Committee
STEVEN G. FOSTER
Gray Line of Dallas/Fort Worth

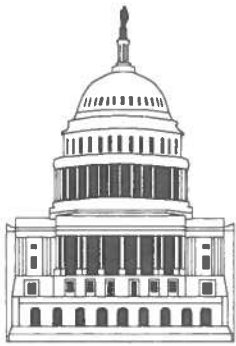
BETTY GARRETT, CMP
Garrett Speakers International

SHARI DEE REYNOLDS
Advocare

PATTY STERN
Five Star Limousines

ROLLIE ANNE BLACKWELL
Gourmet Dallas

Photos by
Mark Lazarow
Photography



Government Affairs TTTMILAD, LAD Coming Soon!

By Steven G. Foster (Gray Line of Dallas/Fort Worth)
MPI D/FW Chapter Government Affairs Committee Chair

In just a few days—**Feb. 26**—many months of work and commitment come to fruition in **Austin**—the inaugural “**Texas Travel, Tourism and Meetings Industry Legislative Action Day**” (TTTMILAD).

There still is time to participate in this landmark event marks the first time various association partners will co-lobby Texas state legislators on behalf of the meetings industry.

As state chairman of the event, I am pleased to report that 13 association partners have joined forces to carry our unified message to the state capital.

MPI will be joined by MPI Hill Country Chapter, MPI Houston Area Chapter, Texas Society of Association Executives, Texas Hotel/Motel Association, International Association of Exposition Managers Central Texas Chapter, National Speakers Association Heart of Texas Chapter, Texas Restaurant Association, National Association of Catering Executives-DFW chapter, Professional Conference Managers Association, Texas Travel Industry Association, Hotel Sales &

Marketing Association International-DFW Chapter and Texas Association of Convention Operations Managers.

Our goal in this first effort is education, but we also will be tackling the tough issue revisions to the hotel tax code. Our focus will be House Bill 92, introduced by Republican Kim Brimer, which seeks to raise taxes on automobile rental and hotel occupancy rates to fund the building of a new sports arenas. The proposed increase on car rentals could be as much as one-half of one percent, while the increase in hotel occupancy would be up to \$5 per day.

Don't miss the opportunity to make your voice heard in Austin. You can make a difference!

While visiting legislators at **The Meeting Industry's Legislative Action Day '97 in Washington, DC, March 6**, we will focus on three issues: •Support by Congress for funding the National Tourism Organization •Traveler safety; and •Restoration to 80% of the business meal deductibility allowance.

MPI has secured special airfare and hotel rates for this event. Call Carolyn Rodriques at (972) 702-3002 for details.



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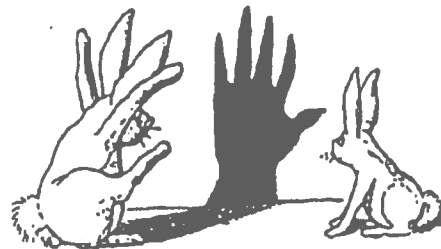
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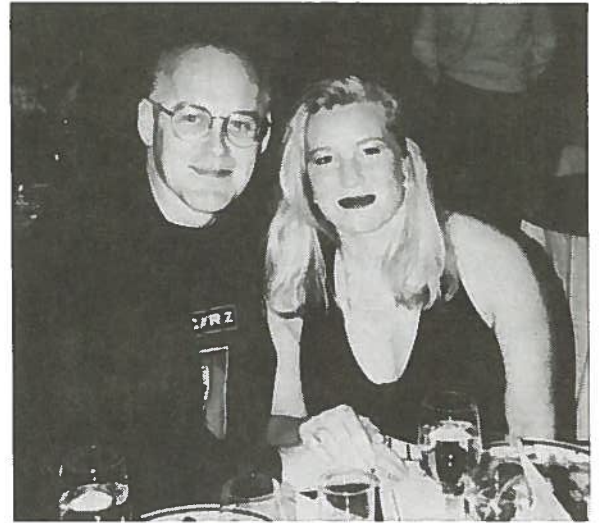
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Steven & Wendy Skalski Foster

*Steven and Wendy (Skalski) Foster
—at PEC-NA,
San Francisco, 1997.
The pair dated five
years before
tying the knot
in 1995.*



Joy Johnson Floyd

*Joy has a special endorsement for
MPI educational opportunities!*

Joy Johnson Floyd, formerly director of sales at Southfork Ranch Event and Conference Center, points to the 1994 MPI National Conference as a major turning point in her life.

A 1982 graduate of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia,

Arkansas, Joy has been in the hospital-ity and meeting planning industry more than 16 years.

She joined the staff at Southfork Ranch in 1988 and was there through the end of 1996.

At the 1994 MPI meeting in

Minneapolis Joy attended a seminar, "Balancing Your Life," directed by Georgia Kostas.

"This seminar changed my life," said Joy. "I determined over the next two years to balance my life and the MPI seminar was the beginning of that process."

Joy and Paul Floyd were college sweethearts at Ouachita, 1978-81. Although separated after Paul graduated, they were reunited in November 1995 and became engaged in August 1996.

"Neither of us had ever been married and it is our firm conviction that God saved us for each other," said Joy.

Joy Lynne Johnson and John Paul Floyd became Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Jan. 4. The couple will make their home in the Atlanta area. (Paul is international sales manager for Antitox Corporation in Buford, Georgia.)

Joy, who looks forward to new adventures with the MPI Atlanta Chapter and career opportunities with the meeting planning industry in the Atlanta area, has a special recommendation for MPI educational programs!



Paul and Joy (Johnson) Floyd—at Southfork Ranch & Conference Center, where Joy served as director of sales until her January 1997 wedding.



In August 1990 Steven Foster was managing field operations for Yellow Rose Touring and Special Events when he spotted Wendy Skalski interviewing for a part-time position.

Wendy, "looking really cute," says Steven, was wearing what he affectionately calls her "country girl" dress.

He jokingly commented to a co-worker, "I'm going to marry that girl."

Wendy remembers her first impression of Steven. She had accepted the position, and although they had spoken on the phone, she and Steven had never met in person. During a busy "meet and greet," a co-worker was desperately seeking the answer to a challenging question over

Steven & Wendy
—both active members of
MPI D/FW—
enjoy being part of the
same industry

a hand-held radio. After a brief silence, a realistic "recording voice" said, "You have reached a person who is not responding. Please try again."

Wendy asked, "Who is that? He's really funny!"

Although they occasionally went out in a group setting, Steven didn't gather the courage to ask Wendy on a date until October—Halloween night, to be exact. Wendy said yes—and the rest is history.

They dated five years (the first six months in secret!) and became Mr. and Mrs. Foster Sept. 23, 1995. Steven said they both enjoy being part of the same industry—Wendy is now with Circle R Ranch, and Steven is with Gray Line of Dallas/Fort Worth.

"Steven is my support and my comic relief, especially during those hair-on-fire, out-of-control days. He is able to offer me reality, while still having fun with life. He is, and always will be, my one true love."

Wendy gave Steven an extra special birthday gift on his 41st birthday Jan. 7 when she announced that their family would be growing.

Be ready to welcome the newest Foster sometime in August!

Billy Carter & Kristi Hollomon



Billy Carter and Kristi Hollomon—in a photo taken just minutes after they met at PEC-NA, Dallas, 1995. Both are wearing Dallas host uniforms. Photo by Cupid Peg Wolschon.



The 1995 MPI Professional Education Conference in Dallas was especially meaningful to D/FW chapter members **Kristi Hollomon** and **Billy Carter**. That's when fellow chapter member Peg Wolschon of Kerrville Bus Company decided to play cupid.

Wolschon introduced the two prior to the Sunday afternoon opening session. She even managed to take a picture of the two just minutes after their first meeting—a photo which has

"MPI has done a lot for me personally and professionally, but this is above and beyond!"

special meaning for both.

"I had the words, December 10, 1995—the best day of my life!" printed on a framed copy of the photograph, and surprised Billy with it as gift, "said Hollomon, national sales manager for J&S Audio Visual, Inc. "I'll remember that date for the rest of my life."

Carter also remembers that first meeting fondly.

"I was like, wow! She just blew me away," said Carter, director of Execucar and contract services for Super Shuttle. "We sat there and talked and talked and talked. It was incredible."

Carter would have preferred to

spend more time getting to know Hollomon at that first meeting, but he had a date of sorts—with nine "cheerleaders." He was among the group of D/FW chapter men who performed as "Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders" during the PEC.

Fortunately, Hollomon agreed to meet him after the opening reception.

"We've been together ever since," she said, adding, "MPI has done a lot for me personally and professionally,

but this is above and beyond!"

The two joked during that busy week about their "conference fling." Once the PEC was over and the attendees had returned home, however, Carter said he knew their relationship was something special. And he wanted more.

"I called her and asked if we could have a 'non-conference' fling," he said.

Hollomon enthusiastically agreed. The two were engaged July 3 and are preparing for a May 7 wedding in Cancun, Mexico.

"I think I may be the luckiest person in the world," said Hollomon.

"We're soulmates," said Carter.

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Opinion, Please!

Q: What was your most memorable Valentine's Day?



Stephanie Schroeder

ITT Sheraton Corporation • Account Director

A: "... when my boyfriend surprised me with dinner and drinks on the Tarantula Train in Fort Worth. It was so fun and such a unique idea. Two months later we were engaged to be married."



Esther Wigley

Appointments Professional Advertising • Owner

A: "... the year I received not just one but two huge heart-shaped boxes of candy—my first Valentine candy—really fancy ones with lace, flowers, gorgeous ribbon and filled with luscious gooey chocolates. They were from the two most important men in my life—my husband and my son!"



Scott Thompson

IGNITION! Creative Group, Inc. • President

A: "... when I asked Jody to marry me. The restaurant I proposed in has long since been demolished. I'm happy to say our marriage did not suffer the same fate."



Denise Howieson

IGNITION! Creative Group, Inc. • President

A: "It was steamy! We decided to have a romantic evening out and stay in a hotel with a Jacuzzi in the room. It was cold, so I turned on the room heater. An hour later, with both the Jacuzzi and the heater going full blast...the alarm went off. You can't imagine how many people responded to that alarm! Needless to say, the remainder of the evening lacked romance—but the memory always brings a smile to my face."

"Opinion, Please" is a question and answer feature column prepared by Denise Howieson (IGNITION! Creative Group).

Heard it through the Grapevine!

Tony W. Cummins has recently joined Adam's Mark Hotel Dallas as catering sales manager. He was formerly with Dallas Park Central Hotel.

Keep up with personal news about fellow MPI chapter members—job changes, promotions, awards or special recognitions, weddings, or births—through "Heard it through the Grapevine." Please contact Mary-Therese Gnadt (214-539-6538 • FAX 214-724-0932 • gnadt@airmail.net) about items of interest for this column.

Meeting Planning TIP

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—submitted by
Dana Nickerson, CMP
(Square One Productions)

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The Kids Charity Ball

TKCB Committee Sets Lofty Goals

By Paige Braun
The Dallas Conventioner

The plans and dreams of the The Kids Charity Ball '97 Committee will become a reality next month. TKCB will be held March 22 at The Great Hall in the Apparel Mart.

"All members of the TKCB Committee are to be commended for their tireless efforts to produce an event to be remembered," said Greg Pynes, the TKCB '97 Chair.

A highlight of the ball is the presentation of the "Bill and Angela Barrett Award." The award is named in honor of a couple who have made countless contributions to a wide range of children's charities.

"Our goal is to raise \$144,000 for children's charities," Pynes said. "To meet this goal, we need the support of the entire MPI D/FW Chapter. Please participate by buying a table—or at least a pair of tickets—and join us March 22 to celebrate our contribution to children in need."

At a special , TKCB Registration and Ticket Sales Chair Delinda Dudley (Six Flags over Texas), will be present at the February meeting to sell tickets.

Tables of 10 are \$800. Individual tickets are \$85. Call Dudley at 817-640-8900 for ticket information or sales.

"In addition to raising funds for children's charities, TKCB is a great vehicle to generate awareness about our industry within the community," Pynes said.

"We're proud and excited to have secured a radio sponsor, a newspaper sponsor and several outdoor billboards which will enhance our ability to further promote the event and our industry. "Hats off to Dana Nickerson, CMP (Square One Productions), our chapter vice president of marketing and PR and TKCB public relations chair, for securing these media sponsors," he said.

As of the middle of last month, many companies have signed on as corporate sponsors (see box on this page), indicating their interest in championing the cause of children in need.

Corporate sponsorships are still available; contact Phyllis Firebaugh (SEI Incentives) at 972-717-1400 for details.

The Auction and Celebrity Bear Committees are still seeking donations. To donate live or silent auction items, please contact Steven Foster (Gray Line of Dallas/Fort Worth) at 972-630-1000. Celebrity Bear Chair Patrice Ewig (Le Meridien Hotel) seeks celebrities to dress or autograph bears. Ewig can be reached at 214-855-1742.



The Kids Charity Ball

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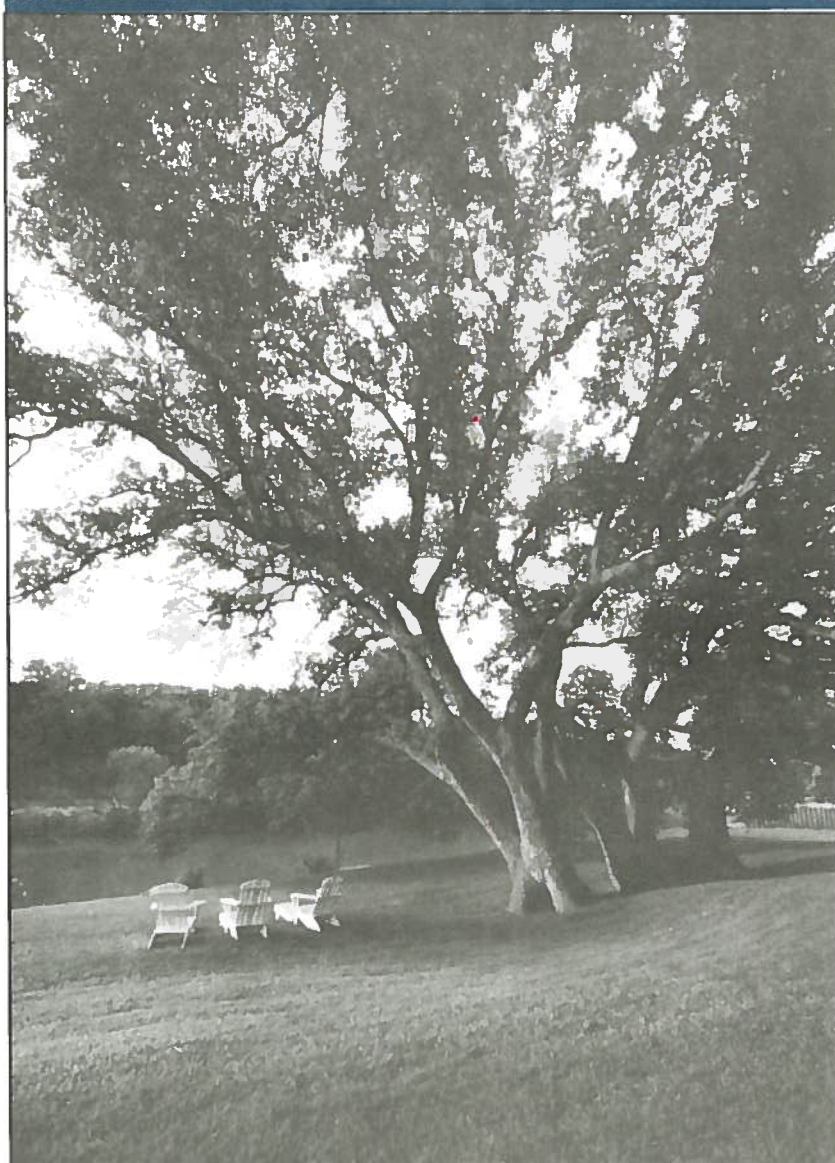


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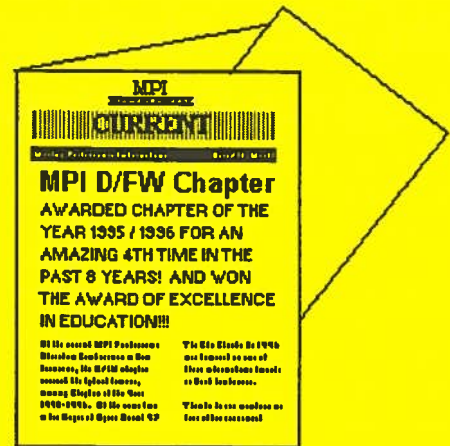
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Half Page	\$600	\$500	\$400	\$300
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Two-Thirds Pg. Vert.	5" x 9 1/2"
Half Page Hor.	7 1/2" x 4 1/2"
Half Page Vert.	3 1/2" x 9 1/2"
Third Page Hor.	4 7/8" x 4 1/2"
Third Page Vert.	2 1/4" x 9 1/2"
Quarter Page Hor.	7 1/2" x 2 1/4"
Quarter Page Vert.	3 1/2" x 4 1/2"

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For more advertising info contact

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The Kids Charity Ball

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I am responsible for full payment or the return of any unsold "Raffle Tickets" on or before
March 22, 1997

Signature

Date