

Chapter of the Year
1989 ★ 1990 ★ 1994
1996 ★ 2001

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Information
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WEBSITE
www.mpidfw.org

9/11: Six Months Later

Chapter Meeting Planners Working Through Industry Impact and Fallout

The events of September 11, 2001 have been referred to as "The Perfect Storm" in their impact on the meetings and events industry. Now, six months removed from that traumatic day and the terrible cost in lives lost, the focus shifts to disrupted business expectations and aiding those whose jobs also were a casualty of 9/11.

MPI D/FW members responding to a survey conducted by "The Current" noted loss of employment, cancellation of events and decreased attendance at meetings as significant concerns. Prior to 9/11, there were 41 meeting planning organizations with at least two chapter members. That number dropped 30% to 31 companies as of last month. Total membership on September 1, 2001 was 939 with a retention rate of 68.07%. As of March 12, 2002, chapter membership was at 884 and retention was 64.95%.



Cheryl Beasley, CMP
Sabre

Those statistics represent people and jobs. Sabre, the largest global distribution system for travel and related-services, reduced its local meeting planning staff from 9 planners to 3 planners in the aftermath of 9/11. Cheryl Beasley, CMP, Sabre's Director of Event Marketing, noted the impact, "The primary business of Sabre is travel, so naturally, our business was immediately impacted by the reduction in

both leisure and corporate travel. The drop resulted in a serious decline in our bookings revenue, and we also cancelled six customer events planned for the fourth-quarter of last year. While we were able to cancel many of these without penalty, some we were not, therefore a financial loss was incurred. In addition, we have reduced our planned events for 2002 by 40%, resulting in a necessity to lay off staff."



LaTrelle Smart, CMP
AMS

LaTrelle Smart, CMP, Director of Conference & Meetings for the AMS Users' Group, says decreased meeting attendance is a challenge. "We are running about 400 attendees lower to our National Conference than last year," she said. "We did some telemarketing of attendees who came to last year's meeting to find out the reasons they had not registered for this year's conference. Most listed budget constraints, the economy and cutbacks in travel."

"I would be interested to hear what other planners are doing to stimulate their attendance, especially ideas for attendance builders, and how to communicate safety and security issues without alarming prospective attendees," said Smart.

Mary Beth Whitted, Director of Events for AdvoCare International, heads a department that shrank from 4 planners to 2 planners since 9/11. Business, however, is up. "Being in a direct sales business, the effect since 9/11 has been an increase in our business and in the number of meetings we host. Our biggest challenge is how to keep pace with the rapidly growing size of our events."



Mary Beth Whitted
Advocare

MPI D/FW VP of Membership Elizabeth Chandler says the chapter is committed to assisting its members in every way possible, and points to several assistance programs directed at post-9/11 industry support. The

Continued on page 9



DEFINING THE POWER OF MEETINGS™

Meeting Professionals International is the world's largest association of meeting professionals with more than 18,000 members in 64 countries and 58 chapters and six clubs. MPI serves as the pivotal force in positioning meetings as a primary communication vehicle and a critical component of an organization's success. MPI leads the meeting industry by serving the diverse needs of members and non-members alike through its commitment to quality education, continuous improvement and excellence in meetings while upholding high ethical standards.

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A Message from the President



DALLAS/FORT WORTH CHAPTER




Betty E. Garrett, CMP
GarrettSpeakers International
Chapter President

In a chapter known for connections, February was one of the busiest months so far. Your board convened at the fabulous Circle R Ranch for the mid-year retreat. This review showed that your leadership is right on target on performance goals and objectives. While total membership has shown a decline, the numbers now are showing some positive signs. Suppliers are taking advantage of joining as members with the stipulation of bringing in a planner within the next 12 months. Anyone needing an application can go online and visit our web site, www.mpidfw.org, or ask for a membership application to be mailed by contacting Elizabeth Chandler, VP of Membership.

Cheryl Beasley, CMP, President-Elect, unveiled her vision to the Board during the retreat. She has a mission to promote professionalism and leadership for 2002-2003! With Cheryl's background as a corporate planner, she will be giving a new vitality to this already awesome chapter. Get ready to rumble come July 1st with Cheryl and your new officers.

WOW...Pat McCain, CMP, the Krisam Group, and her committee know how to organize a successful tradeshow! The event experienced record attendance during the chapter's 3rd annual tradeshow at the February monthly meeting...529! In this struggling economy, this unbelievable result was due to the hard work behind the scenes in marketing to the various professional organizations. Hats off to Pat McCain and her committee for a job well done! Be sure to ask Debra Lakin about her winning the grand prize trip to Hawaii sponsored by Starwood Hotels - Hawaii.

No, the red apple banks on the tables during the monthly meetings are not promoting the Red Apple Sale at Foley's! They are in response to the MPI Greater New York Chapter's request for relief assistance for the tragic events of September 11th. Greater New York is requesting monetary donations be made to their newly created Jay Magazine Memorial Fund. Jay Magazine was an MPI GNY member who died in the attacks on the World Trade Center. He left behind a wife and two children. Donations will be collected from March through June 2002, then sent to the Jay Magazine Memorial Fund. The fund will work in three ways: a portion will go to the Robin Hood Relief Fund which issues grants to various New York agencies directly assisting victims of the attacks; a portion will go to the Children's Hope Foundation, which assists victims of pediatric AIDS; and a portion will assist chapter members who can show hardship caused by loss of job or other circumstances to attend chapter events. This fund will serve as a living memorial for Jay by providing ongoing assistance to chapter members in need and allow us to connect in a meaningful way with our meeting industry colleagues in need. Look for the red apple banks at our monthly chapter meetings. Checks and cash donations will be accepted. For donations or any questions, contact Todd Quigley, Designs Behind the Scenes, for further information.

Our chapter continues to offer numerous opportunities for your return on investment. The Job Search Support Group was in direct response to YOUR need by offering a forum to share job tips, resume writing, and interviewing techniques after each monthly meeting. This is your opportunity to get involved while staying connected. YOU are the lifeblood of this organization so get connected, get involved. **Shape your Future: Connect.** 



E.J. Siwek

FLASHpoint Technologies

“CURRENT” AFFAIRS

Managing Viruses - Helpful Hints and Tips

Editor's Note: Each month, this column will present an industry profile, hot topic debate or industry event review to focus reader interest and discussion on “Current” Affairs. Your participation and feedback in this effort is both vital and welcome. Take this opportunity to voice your opinion. Let me know what you think. - Steven G. Foster, CMP, Managing Editor.

Most of us can't live without computer technology! Everyday most of us use the Internet to check e-mail, research a site, send a RFP, collaborate with others in virtual meetings or simply attach a file for one of our colleagues.

And everyday we could lose it all thanks to a plethora of computer viruses that travel through the World Wide Web. The bottom line is that each of us needs to personally educate ourselves on how best to fight the thousands of online viruses that have the potential to cause serious damage to our computers.

What to do?

First, subscribe to an online antivirus application. All of the major players provide the ability to automatically update and scan files during periods that you can schedule. Enrolling and scheduling these live updates virtually provides the best layer of protection. When initially setting up your software, select the option to scan all incoming and outgoing e-mail messages.

Second, consider updating your system's operating platform, web browser and word processing applications. Thankfully, the major players provide an option to be notified whenever a critical update is released. By maintaining your operating system and primary programs, you can take advantage of enhanced functionality developed for your web browser utility such as Internet Explorer as well as take advantage of improved filtering options that will automatically stop the ability to receive or transmit potentially dangerous files.

Third, consider installing a personal firewall on your home computers. Businesses should already have firewalls! Firewalls will prevent access by hackers as well as unauthorized access to system files. Firewalls are especially important if you use a cable modem. With this class of modem if your computer is on, then you are connected and vulnerable. All firewall programs allow you to preset filters that allow transmissions by those known to you while closing out all others or by alerting you whenever attempts to communicate with your system files occur.

Bookmark one of the major sites that provide anti-virus software and research on viruses and worms. All of these sites will provide you with updated research of current viruses as well as provide a directory of published hoaxes.

Sites to bookmark:

www.mcafee.com www.symantec.com
www.fsecure.com

Most importantly, backup all of your major or vital files. There are many options available for backing up your system, ranging from backing up to an added hard-drive, a CD, a tape drive or to an offsite secured service. Remember when a virus hits, the impact it has on your system can range anywhere from being a nuisance to critical.

What not to do:

Do not automatically assume that you have a virus unless your anti-virus program confirms it. If you suspect you have a virus, update your virus definitions and engine.

Do not send a blanket e-mail to all friends warning them of an e-mail virus unless the virus you may have encountered has affected them directly.

Some Other Tips to Avoid Catching a Virus

* Know who you are receiving attached files from before opening. You can filter names you trust or don't trust in your personal firewall.

* Read the subject line of your e-mail. If it doesn't sound right, delete the message.

* Delete chain e-mails and junk email. Don't even go there. This type of mail is simply a nuisance. Consider setting up your E-mail application to automatically file these items.

* Exercise caution when downloading files from the Internet. If you need the file and are unfamiliar with the site's reputation, download the file to a floppy disk and test it with your own anti-virus software or prior to downloading double check the settings on your anti-virus application so it scans the file before downloading.

* Update your anti-virus software weekly, if not more often. Hundreds of viruses are discovered monthly. Viruses are simply something we all have to deal with. Each year billions of dollars are spent on recovering damage created by rampant viruses and viral worms. Taking a measure of protection will be well worth the effort.

E.J. Siwek, CMP is President and Founder of FLASHpoint Technologies, an innovative company providing research and informative articles on technology solutions to the meeting industry. E.J. has been active in the meeting industry for 25 years as a planner, publisher, and consultant. In July 2001, E.J. was selected by Meeting News as one of the Top 25 Influential Leaders in the industry for his efforts in educating and informing meeting professionals on meeting technology. E.J. can be reached ej@flashpointtech.com

DALLAS/FT. WORTH
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Chapter Meeting: Thursday, April 25, 2002 • 8:00 a.m.

Medical Risk Management for Meeting Professionals

Wake up for "Breakfast with the Doctor" on Thursday, April 25, 2002 at the Wyndham Anatole Hotel. MPI D/FW presents Jonathan Spero, M.D., President and CEO, InHouse Physicians (IHP). Dr. Spero, an MPI member, is a board-certified internist/emergency physician and his risk management advice has been featured in *Meetings & Conventions Successful Meetings*.

InHouse Physicians provides on-site medical services, wellness programs and risk management consulting to a distinguished client list of Fortune 1000 companies. IHP's on-site health professionals have "risk-proofed" some of the largest and most notable events of the last decade, including assignments at the Atlanta and Sydney Summer Olympics, involving over 20 Corporate sponsors and approximately 150,000 attendees.

Dr. Spero's discussion topics will include:

- How to properly evaluate a meeting site for medical preparedness
- Defining the specific medical risks associated with your program
- Acquiring the necessary tools to ensure a safe/risk-averse international program
- The basics of handling a medical emergency

A popular and engaging speaker, Dr. Spero is regarded as one of the few experts in the meeting planning industry on medical liability. IHP has been on the firing line of medical risk management issues for more than twelve years and Dr. Spero's presentation is designed for anyone who faces the responsibility of coping with medical liability issues at meetings and events.

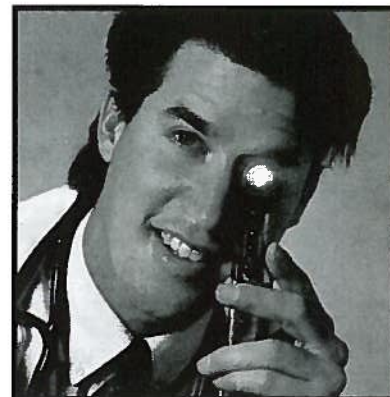
The Puerto Rico Convention & Visitors Bureau is the sponsor of April's Breakfast Meeting and representatives Michele Woodward and Rebecca Hazel will highlight the many opportunities available for meetings and travel in Puerto Rico.

April Program Committee members include Gloria Ford, CMP (Radisson Hotel Dallas North at Richardson), Tamara Quilty, CMP (Dr. Pepper/7-Up), Thomas White (Noble Coaches/1st Executives Transportation), Mary Sanger (Blue Mesa Grill) and Delene Bell (Liland's Special Events)

DALLAS/FT. WORTH
CHAPTER



DEFINING THE POWER OF MEETINGS™



Jonathan Spero, M.D.
InHouse Physicians

DIRECTIONS TO

Wyndham Anatole Hotel

From Downtown Dallas: North on Stemmons Frwy. (35E North) Exit Market Center, turn left to go under the freeway. Hotel is on the right.

From West: Go east on Highway 30 to I-35E North. Exit at Market Center, turn left to go under the freeway. Hotel is on the right.

From South: Go north on Stemmons Freeway (I-35E North). Exit at Market Center, turn left to go under the freeway. Hotel is on the right.

From North: Go south on Stemmons Freeway. Exit at Market Center. Hotel will be on right.

Mark Your Calendars for Upcoming Meetings

Thursday, May 23, 2002
Doubletree Lincoln Centre
11:00am - 1:30pm
Keith Harrell

Thursday, June 27, 2002
Fairmont Hotel
6:00pm - 10:00pm
Awards Gala

Thursday, July 25, 2002
Ft. Worth Convention Center

Medical Risk Management for Meeting Professionals

Thursday, April 25, 2002

Wyndham Anatole Hotel

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7:15 am	Registration Wedgewood Ballroom Foyer
8:00 am - 9:30 am	Breakfast & Program Wedgewood Ballroom
9:30 am - 10:30 am	Chapter Orientation Travertine Room
9:30 am - 11:00 am	MPI Job Networking Wyeth Room

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Advanced Guest Price:	\$22.00
Onsite Price:	\$25.00

R.S.V.P. to Randie Charnes
by 2:00 p.m., Monday, April 22, 2002
fax: 972-506-7485

ON-LINE REGISTRATION PREFERRED

Website Registration: www.mpidfww.org



Colleen Rickenbacher,
CMP, CSEP
Colleen Rickenbacher, Inc.

Advancing Women

Women's Leadership Initiatives: Business Etiquette

On April 19 at the Mansion on Turtle Creek, Plaza Towers Conservatory, the Women's Leadership Initiatives (WLI) committee will have the first workshop of the spring series. Guest speaker Colleen Rickenbacher, CMP, CSEP will present business & dining Etiquette for Women. Below are just a few highlights to be discussed.

First impressions can do a lot to make or break a business deal. This could involve the way you look, the way you conduct your business or even the way you present yourself at a business meal. You must always convey a professional look.

It has been proven that it takes less than 10 seconds for people to make an impression. What you wear and how you present yourself can influence others. You must dress to appear that you have confidence and are in control. It is important to focus on dressing appropriately. Even with the "Business Casual" appearance that some offices are allowing, you must still look like you are ready for a day in the office as opposed to a day at the mall. You do not need to spend extravagant money to present the image or look, but, you must take the time while shopping or selecting your clothes to make wise choices. Your clothes can be fun, but remember, it is better to have less clothing of a higher quality than lots of poorly constructed "trendy" clothing.

Important Items/Hints for a Well-Dressed Person

- * A lint brush (those napkins at a restaurant can destroy your dark clothes)
- * A sewing kit (remember to take it with you while you travel)
- * An iron and ironing board (there is nothing worse than looking wrinkled)

- * Shoe polish (shoes should always be polished and well-heeled)
- * A good jacket or sweater
- * At least one pair of good shoes
- * One piece of good/nice jewelry (watch the size of jewelry)
- * Dress appropriately for the occasion (if in doubt, call & ask the dress code)
- * Good grooming (don't go to work with no make-up and wet hair)
- * If you are dressing the same way you did 10 years ago, it is time to change
- * If in doubt, dress conservatively
- * Attention to detail is a virtue that everyone looks for in a person

For more information on this topic contact:

Colleen A. Rickenbacher, CMP, CSEP, Colleen Rickenbacher, Inc.
214.571.1040, email: cr@colleenrickenbacher.com,
www.colleenrickenbacher.com

For more information on WLI contact:

Dana Nickerson-Rhoden, CMP, CMM, American Heart Association,
Ph: 214.706.1420, Fx: 214.373.3406, email: dana.nickerson@heart.org,
register online at www.mpidfw.org

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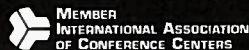


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March Meeting Chapter Partners

Please salute the following companies and individuals for their contributions to the meeting.

Host Facility

Renaissance Dallas - Richardson Hotel
Tom Dwyer
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Jacques Monteil, CMP

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Melissa Clouch, CMP
Kentucky Fried Chicken

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"OOPS We Goofed"
Corrections to January Chapter Partners

Centerpieces

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Out of the Garden
Donna Smith

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March Meeting Highlights



Representatives from the 2001 MPI D/FW Kids Charity Ball were on hand at the March Chapter Meeting to receive their portions of the net proceeds.

Featured left to right are Rodney Holcomb, Executive Director of AIDS Arms, Mary Dowling, Board of Director for WipeOut Kids Cancer, Beverly Nalley, Executive Director and Jim Archibald, Board Member for Love for Kids.

The total amount provided to these Dallas and Fort Worth based agencies totaled \$27,347.25. Each of the 2001 beneficiaries provides critical services to children impacted by HIV, Cancer, and Economic Deprivation.

In addition, our Chapter's Education Fund benefited by receiving \$7,652.75.



The Spirit of MPI Award was presented to Bill Reeser, CMP, CTS, of AVW-TELAV Audio Visual Solutions. Bill is among the chapter's most active members, serving each month as AV Liaison between the Program Committee and the host venue.



March Program Committee, l-r, Carol Benavidez, CMP (HelmsBriscoe), Luana Stoutmeyer (Encore Productions), Holley Edwards (4200 Cityplace), Thomas White (Noble Coaches/1st Executives Transportation), Tracie Mihaila, CMP (Crowne Plaza Market Center), Sherry DeLaGarza, CMP (Independent) and Melissa Clouch, CMP (Kentucky Fried Chicken).



Jim Henderson, VP of Sales & Marketing for the Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau, brought a plenty of Alaskan Spirit with him to the March Meeting. Joining the Anchorage CVB as the official host for March were Michele Hubbard and Karen Thornhill (Hilton Anchorage), Kathryn Stone (Alyeska Prince Hotel/Alyeska Resort), Shannon King Hamlett (Anchorage CVB) and Carol B. Lutz (Hotel Captain Cook).

**Photos by
Jim Woods Photography**



Representing the Renaissance Dallas - Richardson Hotel were, l-r, Jackie Devine, Director of Sales and Marketing, Jacques Monteil, CMP, Director of Catering and Tammy Gibson Alaoui, Sales Manager.



Suzanne Silver
HamptonInn-WestEnd



From The Heart

Can you help?

We are hoping to reach \$3100.00 worth of donations in order to meet our annual goal of \$6000.00 for Community Service projects.

The Community Service Committee will be accepting donations of toiletries and clothing at our monthly chapter meeting being held on May 23rd at the Doubletree Hotel Lincoln Centre. All donations will benefit the Genesis Women's Shelter.

Donations can consist of any gently used clothing items including coats, blankets and sheets as well as shirts and pants. Toiletries such as shampoo, conditioner and toothpaste are always needed. We are looking for both sample sizes as well as full size bottles. Hoteliers' or any toiletry items will be appreciated!

Anyone who donates items will be eligible for a drawing to win Dinner for Two at the French Room in the Adolphus Hotel. For information on the event or Genesis Women's Shelter, contact Event Chair, Colin Clayton, CMP at cclayton@bristolhotels.com.

MPI D/FW Chapter 2002 Resource Handbook



It's time to advertise your business to the reigning MPI Chapter of the Year!

As a member of the DFW Chapter, this is your opportunity to reach more than 900 key Meeting Professionals in the Metroplex. Reinforce your message by running an advertisement in the Resource Handbook members use throughout the year. Reach the real "movers and the shakers" in the hospitality industry. For rates, contact: Nancey Hernandez, CMP, (214) 651-3622 or nhernandez@adolphus.com



Alainna Palmer, CMP
Highwire
'Grapevine' Columnist

Heard it through the Grapevine!

Severine Stephenson has joined the *Studio Movie Grill* as special events manager for their two locations at Prestonwood and Park at Preston. She was formerly with *PGI* of Dallas.

Linda O'Brien and Carmen Murphey, CMP are the new special event sales managers at the *Dave & Buster's* in Frisco at Stonebriar Centre and in Dallas on Central at Walnut Hill, respectively.

Congrats! Lisa South, CMP, CSEP on your new designation of CSEP!

Deb Muszynski has joined the national sales office of *DMI (Destinations for Meetings & Incentives)* as their national sales manager. She was previously with *Hyatt Hotels & Resorts* and is now living in Chicago and working the Texas market. Welcome back, Deb!

Rainbow Entertainment & Special Event Services was selected by The Spirit of Entrepreneurism Conference to provide entertainment and special event services for Governor Rick Perry's meeting on Biotech.

Candice Hahn has left *GameWorks* to pursue other interests.

To submit member news and information, please contact
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HIGHWIRE/Adventures in Advertising
214-387-8634 • Fax 972-377-8730
apalmer@highwirepromotions.com

Membership FAQ:

Our Eyes are on YOU!

Question:

"I'm a member of MPI D/FW Chapter. Do you know of any job openings in my field?"

Answer:

The Job Search Support Group Networking event is held prior to the Chapter Luncheon meetings (11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon) and immediately following Chapter Breakfast meetings (9:30 - 11:00 a.m.). Check out the job postings on the bulletin board near the Member Services table.

Post your available job position. Post your business card or resume. Meet other members who have leads to share. For further information, contact: Matthew Feldman, DFW Chapter "Connector" at mfeldman@hcareers.com.

DFW Chapter Job Board

Members post resumes free. Discounted fee for members to post job opening. Log on to the chapter web site: www.mpidfw.org or contact: Pat McCain, CMP at pat_mccain@krisam.com.



Bill Reeser, CMP, CTS
AVW Audio Visual, Inc.

SPIRIT OF MPI!

"Bill has consistently supported our chapter meetings and educational offerings for several years. As recently as this month, I asked for a projection screen—at the last minute. He cheerfully responded with a 'sure, no problem, maybe you should also use...' He's always suggesting professional solutions. Even during his last vacation, he responded to our Chapter's needs. Most of you have

had the opportunity to interact with Bill as a team player on the Program Committee, during an education session, as he provides AV support and as an "instructor" for the CMP Study Groups. He always makes me feel like my committee's needs are just as important as any other's. He represents the "go-give" professional attitude our Chapter is proud of."

9/11: from page 1




Elizabeth Chandler
The Meadows Foundation

chapter has waived the fee to post a resume on its Job Board, reduced the fee for companies listing employment opportunities and hosts a Job Search Support Group/Networking session at each monthly meeting. Chandler said, "We're finding that long-term people (over 5-8 years) in the industry, both planner and supplier alike, have been able to find another position because of their relationships and connections from MPI. Those newer to the industry are struggling."

Assistance programs from MPI International also are in place. The MPI Foundation, with support from Hilton Hotels, has extended memberships for six months to those who lost jobs as a result of the 9/11 events. Additionally, the "planner match" requirement for suppliers has been waived through May 31, 2002, providing suppliers recruit a new planner within 12 months of joining. MPI also has waived the \$50 new member application fee through June 30, 2002.

Beasley, scheduled to begin her term as chapter president in July, believes MPI D/FW can make a major contribution to the industry, and its planner members. "As we are all doing more with less, keeping employees motivated and working smarter, continuing to provide high quality educational offerings and identifying key areas of need for planners is very important," she said.

Erin Longley, CMP, Executive Partner of Imagine Events, agreed saying, "The chapter needs to keep updating us on status of industry and the economy, and continue to provide great networking opportunities and educational programs." 

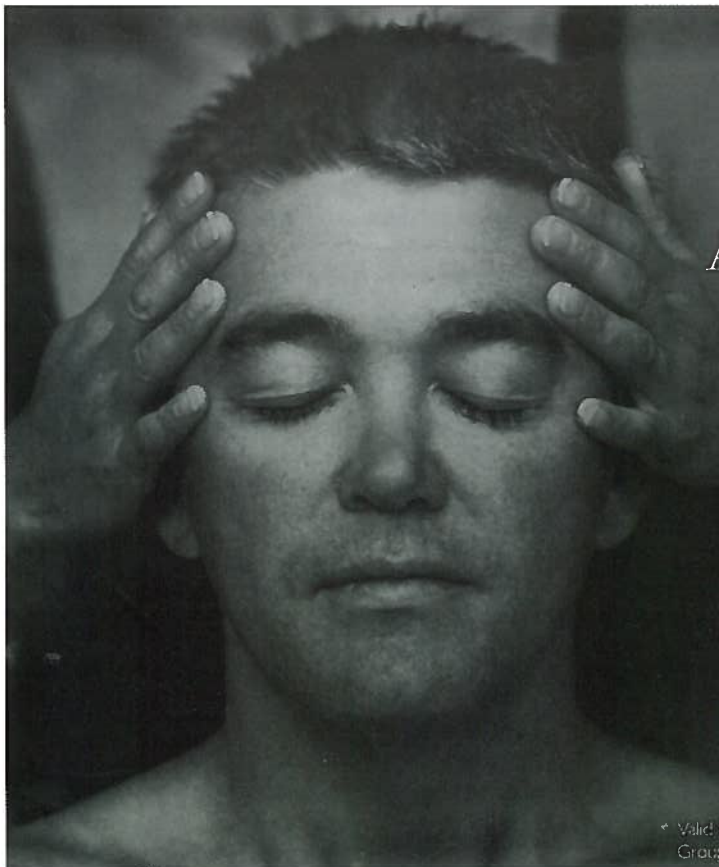


Erin Longley, CMP
Imagine Events

New Kids on the Block

Welcome to Our Newest Members!

- Randy E. Beckham.....Pyrotex Inc
- Cathy L. Bullard.....The Movie Studios at Las Colinas
- Franco J. Castaldo.....Harrah's Entertainment
- Thomas J. Chevins.....Omni Hotels
- Steven L. Daughenbaugh.....Success Systems International
- Valerie J. Drane.....Boi Na Braza Brazilian Steak House
- Melissa M. Eakes.....Renaissance Meetings & Incentives
- Mary K. Fisher.....Transplace Travel
- Sue L. Fry.....PGI Inc
- Trina M. Gibson.....Embassy Suites DFW-South
- Jill J. Gisler.....Exxon Mobil Corporation
- Cynthia C. Golden, CHSE.....Embassy Suites-Outdoor World
- Nancy A. Haddix.....Derse Exhibits
- Mimi B. Hall.....The Coeur D'Alene Resort
- Scott A. Horgan.....Hyatt Regency San Antonio
- Nicole J. Jameson.....Hotel Monteleone
- David W. Johnson.....Wyndham International
- Kathleen M. Kennedy.....La Mansion Del Rio Hotel
- Rose Ann Martinez.....SBC Center
- Patrick S. Melvin.....MIT @ Cinemark Theatres
- Megan K. Moran.....Dallas Fan Fares Inc
- Staci D. Murphy.....Ice Sculptures Direct Inc
- Debbi L. Murphy.....Hilton Arlington
- Julie Murphy.....Ericsson Inc
- Rita Napurano.....Dallas Marriott Las Colinas
- Norma J. Nichols.....Farmers Branch CVB
- Brad Parker.....Retro 1951
- Carolyn T. Petty.....EEM Worldwide Inc
- Jenny M. Richard.....Abbey Party Rents
- Lucy Rivas.....Bella Flora of Dallas Inc
- Melissa A. Soliz.....Lincoln Restaurant Group
- Rick Tantlinger.....On-Line Meeting Services/OMS
- Shirley G. Todd.....Radisson Resort South Padre Island
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Jennie Campbell,
CMP, CMM
Meet Your Market

How is a Conference Center Unique?

Part II

What makes a conference center unique? That is actually a very good question.

Just as there are different types of meeting professionals, there are different types of facilities to be considered when planning a meeting. The requirements of the meeting will, of course, be a primary factor in the choice of facility. Additional considerations in the decision-making process will include certifications, location, accessibility for attendees, design of meeting space, technology capabilities and support, and consolidation of time.

Conference centers are uniquely designed so that your standard requirements are satisfied. Most conference centers include:

- * Location near main transportation infrastructures (airports, train or subway stations, major highways)
- * State-of-the-art Audio Visual and Communication Systems
- * Complete comprehensive packages for the Meeting Planner
- * Rooms designed to be more conducive to technology training and presentations
- * Capability of technological add-ons such as satellite dishes, if necessary, and the proper lines with which to connect them
- * Housing, such as hotels, either associated with the complex or nearby
- * Facilities targeted toward meeting the needs of a specific market


Once you have determined that a conference center is the best choice for your meeting, your next task is to choose the best facility for your purpose. When planning conferences in multiple cities, it is important to the meeting professional to have reliability and accountability. As a corporate

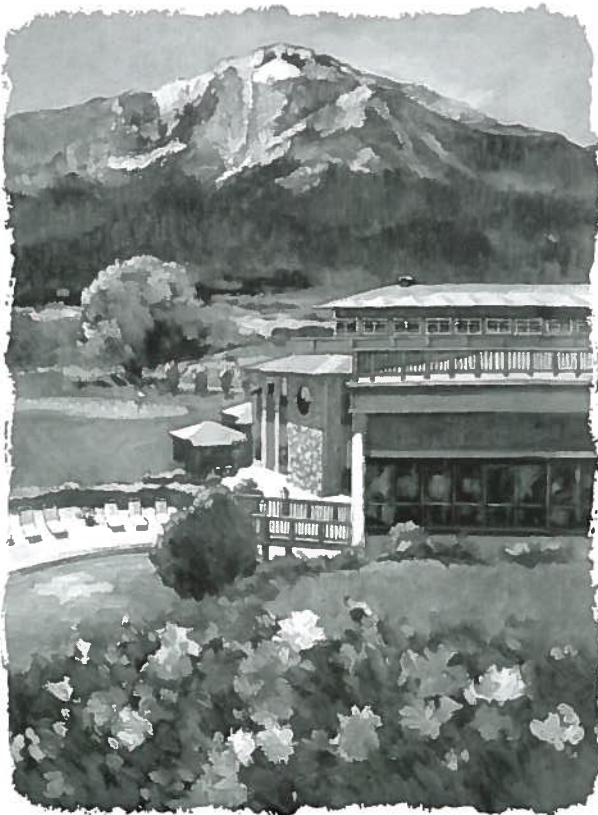
project manager and meeting planner for a technology company, I also found my time to be very limited. Therefore, as a Certified Meeting Professional and Certified Meeting Manager, I have found certifications to be significantly important.



The International Association Conference Centers (IACC) certification was critically important to me as I traveled to different cities all over the country. Just as meeting professionals distinguish themselves as specialists through education and certification, conference centers may distinguish themselves as specialists through IACC certification. I found I could depend upon this certification, knowing that the particular conference center I was considering met the requirements that would facilitate my trainings, therefore eliminating the time and expense of multiple site inspection trips. This proved to be a cost-effective and reliable method in choosing facilities.

When both parties of an agreement are educated, reliability follows. This becomes even more critical to the meeting professional in times of downsizing. Professionals today are working with smaller staff, reduced budgets and higher expectations. Efficiency and reliability are of utmost importance, and many times certification can play an important role in the process toward making a final decision.

Join us for an in-depth review of how IACC Certified Conference Centers ensure the success of your programs on Monday, May 6 at the Hilton DFW Lakes Executive Conference Center. Look for more details on the MPI DFW Chapter web site. 



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Tracey Smith, CMP
RIA
2001 Planner of the Year

Awards Profile: Tracey Smith, CMP - 2001 Planner of the Year

Tracey has been organizing events as far back as college. She started with tax software developer, CLR/Fast-Tax (now RIA) in 1985 as a technical editor, then in 1991 began working on trade shows, sales meetings and user conferences. Tracey designed and evolved a groupware application for their user conferences that manages all the elements and is used by more than 150 employees. In 1998 Tracey earned her CMP designation and was promoted to manager of events programming. Tracey is responsible for determining the objectives for each marketing event and overseeing program development for the tax software user conferences and social events.

Tracey has served on numerous committees for the MPI D/FW Chapter, including serving on the board of directors for two years and chairing the 2003 MPI Kids Charity Ball. Since 1996, she has directed the marketing efforts for the chapter.

Born on April 17th in Midland, Texas, and married Chris Smith almost 15 years ago. They have three cats and a Sheltie.

Q: How did you start your career in the meetings industry?

A: Like many planners, I eased into it through the marketing department doing trade shows and sales meetings. I didn't realize there was an "industry" for meetings and events, but when Dianna Case (Albuquerque CVB) brought me to a MPI D/FW Chapter meeting, I knew I found a home. Sitting with Sarge, Kemble and O.D. at another meeting hooked me!

Q: What would you do if not in the meetings industry?

A: There are many things...I would love to work at the Container Store, write screenplays, or own my own lodge in the mountains. Okay, so maybe I could run a lodge in Utah, with a Container Store-franchised gift shop and get discovered at the Sundance Film Festival!

Q: What do you like BEST and WORST about your job?

A: LOVE - Seeing an event come together after all the planning. Satisfied attendees make me very happy! DISLIKE - Waiting for other people to furnish information, keeping me from moving forward. I'm a bit impatient!


Q: What do you like to do in your spare time?

A: Sometimes I pretend to play golf. The best time is spending it with my husband, Chris and really good friends.

Q: What is your favorite vacation and/or travel spot?

A: I adore the Pensacola/Destin area, but I'm currently in love with north-western Canada and Alaska.

Q: What advice would you offer to someone starting out in this business?

A: Learn as much as possible by reading trade publications, attending classes and listening to other meeting professionals. I've learned the most from sitting on committees and hearing the "side" conversations. Many of my MPI pals are suppliers and you can get a tremendous perspective from them. But, don't waste your time if you're not passionate about your attendees' meeting/event experience. 

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