

## WEC 2011

### Nancy Hoffman, CMP MPINCC Scholarship Winner

I was thrilled to win my WEC-11 scholarship for several reasons. It had been many years since I attended (I was President Elect of The Potomac Chapter the last time I went), so much has changed with technology and efficiencies. Nonetheless, there were several people I have not seen in a few decades, so it was exciting to catch up with colleagues. The community of MPI has not changed at all. People still need to get together in person and communicate. I found it extremely helpful to get the list "Look Who's Coming" from the website so I could connect with people ahead of time and make sure I could plan to see them while in Orlando.

As a supplier who also is a part-time planner, I had goals to meet for both hats. For my planner position, I wanted to attend classes such as "Developing the Must Have Mindset: Reacting Positively to Threats to your Budget" and "Driving Record Exhibitor and Attendees to your Event" as well as meet a few suppliers regarding upcoming meetings later this year. I walked away with several ideas and plan to implement them. For my supplier position, I particularly enjoyed Flash Point, 8 powerful and inspiring speakers who helped everyone in the room think outside the box. I really enjoyed Kelly Cutrone (author of "Normal Gets you Nowhere") and Fabien Cousteau to spark my creativity!! I also enjoyed the class/workshop "Increasing Sales: Learn to be People Smart". I had a very dynamic group of eight at my table and we have all sent notes to each other since we returned home to track progress on our findings.

My overall objectives were very simple: Attend as many classes and networking events as possible. Meet new people and reconnect with customers and colleagues from both coasts!

There were so many networking events- luncheons every day, CMP breakfast, The Blitz (almost a mini-trade show, but more like a cocktail party), and fundraiser events like The Big Deal to support MPI Foundation. At first, I thought it would be "strange" to not have a trade show, but I think this was a far more productive format as there were so many opportunities to meet planners and suppliers (and I work with both since my supplier business is promotional/logo items). ! The Hive, the new "spot" for showcasing the latest technology and social media, was a great place to learn about new products available and trends, particularly interesting for us in Northern California.

My favorite quote came from the General Session speaker, Joe Calloway: "If you're afraid to fail, you'll never do anything the least bit brilliant". He talked about how so many companies play it safe and urged attendees to do something with these great ideas which are often kept on hold. I have thought about this several times over the last few weeks. We all need to take risks or we will never move forward.