



Meeting News

April 2008

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President's Message



Dear Chapter Members:

"Say what you mean, mean what you say and don't be mean saying it."

Think about it for a minute and it does make sense. It tends to give you balance in how you handle your personal

Critical Excel Tools for the Meeting Professional *MPI NENY Platinum Program: Tuesday, April 22, 2008*

Speaker: **James Spellos, CMP**

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

8:30am - 12:00pm

Breakfast followed by Program

NYS United Teachers, Latham, New York

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Excel is the most widely used business application software in the marketplace. Unfortunately, most users just know the basics and spend countless hours re-formatting spreadsheets that could be accomplished in a fraction of the time. Learn how to harness the fundamental and advanced tools of Excel in this session. Utilizing meeting industry examples (tracking, registration, and housing), see how Excel can save time on all aspects of your job. Additionally, attend this session and you will work with and receive 3 meeting industry spreadsheets: Rack Rate, Break Even Analysis and Attrition.

Attendees should bring a laptop with them if possible. If not, they will be paired with someone who does. All attendees will receive an email prior to the event that contains all the spreadsheets we will be working on in class.

Take-aways

- Use over 15 advanced Excel tools
- Customize graphs and use other conditional formatting features
- Discuss how to combine information in multiple worksheets into a single cell

Member Testimonial

professional, and family life.

A big **“Thank You”** to our speaker - **Meryl Runion** for giving us some great advice and to the **Albany Marriott** for hosting it.

As a Chapter, we have always tried to build strong relationships. One area has been in how we as a chapter view the relationship with each of our members. **We have always and will continue to appreciate your commitment, financial support and willingness to step up and help make this Chapter even better!**

We have started to update the **MPI points program** for our annual meeting on **June 12 at Longfellows in Saratoga**. It is a simple program, commit to MPI and we assign you points. Those points are then used as a base for bidding on great prizes at the annual meeting. **It is one way that we recognize what you do to help the Chapter.**

Have you found a new planner member yet this year? Our **“Get a Member – Getaway Weekend”** is scheduled for **May 3 & 4, 2008**. This is a tremendous opportunity for those that recruited new planner members this year as well as those new members who joined us this year. Talk about adding value to your membership! Turning Stone is planning a wonderful event and I hope all invited can make it.

Finally, as we plan our future programs, we welcome and need your input as to what you want us to bring to you. We want you to feel wanted, because you make us

I thought I knew a lot about Excel, but I was just touching the iceberg! From minute number one I learned a new tip and by the end of the course I was able to teach my coworkers some intermediate concepts which can be applied specifically to meeting planning. This is a meeting not to miss!

Megan Kiessling, CMP, Site Solutions Worldwide

About the Speaker



James Spellos, CMP is the President of **Meeting U., a company specializing in training in the topics of technology applications and meeting planning**. A certified Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS), he has been a faculty member at New York University since 1990. He also develops and delivers courses for worldwide leading seminar organizations, as well as customizing his “Way Cool” technology seminars for his clients.

Jim publishes a free monthly technology e-letter called *Techniques*, covering cool technology and productivity tools both within the meetings industry, as well as for professional and personal use.

Jim’s first book, **99 Fabulous Food Websites You Can’t Eat Without** (co-authored with his brother Peter) was published in late 2006. He is also an accomplished musician and songwriter, playing guitar, keyboards and singing in New York City-based rock band Contraband. Their first CD is scheduled for release in 2008...they hope.

James Spellos, CMP, MOS

jspellos@meeting-u.com

<http://www.meeting-u.com>

Northeastern NY Chapter Newest CMPs

Five More MPI NENY Members Pass the February 2008 Exa

MPI NENY would like to congratulate our Members who recently took and **PASSED** the February CMP exam in New York City. **Congratulations to all of you!** Your hard work and dedication paid off. We wish you the best of luck as you move forward in the next chapter of your meeting professional careers.

MPI NENY's Newest CMP's

Vanessa LaClair, CMP - Independent Power Producers of New York, Inc.

Terri Murphy, CMP - NYS Credit Union League, Inc. & Affiliates

Pamela O'Connor, CMP - NYS Credit Union League Inc. & Affiliates

Linda Persico, CMP - The Conference Center Niagara Falls

Phyllis Secor, CMP - New York State Funeral Directors Association

Thinking about getting YOUR CMP designation? The next exam will be given on August 9, 2008. If you are interested in the Summer Exam, the Application is

successful.

I have started my countdown, two more messages from Mike, hope you have enjoyed them!

**- Mike Snyder, CMP
MPI NENY Chapter President**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MPI NENY sends its best wishes and congratulations to **Rachel Alcaro, CMP**, Sales Manager for the Syracuse CVB, who gave birth to her daughter, Amanda Marie on February 14, 2008, weighing in at 5lbs, 11oz! **Rachel and Amanda doing great!**

Save the Dates in 2008! MPI NENY

April 22: *Platinum Program*
Critical Excel Tools for the Meeting Professional

May 21: Special Events Showcase

June 3: Annual Golf Tournament

August 20: 4th Annual Saratoga Track Day

Please refer to the website for more details:
www.mpineny.org

MPI NENY Annual Golf Tournament June 3, 2008

Save the Date: MPI NENY Annual Golf Tournament will be held at Saratoga National Golf Course on **Tuesday, June 3, 2008.**

The day begins at 11:30 am

due on April 9th! MPI NENY is here to help YOU prepare! Study group sessions for the Summer Exam will be announced soon.

Summer Exam Deadlines

Application: April 9
Registration: June 11
Examination: August 9

Please visit the CIC website for information on exam locations and costs associated with each application or registration. CMP exam study guides and reference materials are also available for purchase on the CIC website at www.conventionindustry.org!

Quest for the CMP Designation

One member's personal journey

My CMP journey started in March 2007. I couldn't wait for the application handbook and recommended study books to arrive from the Convention Industry Council (CIC). I briefly looked at the application and thought – piece of cake – no problem coming up with 90 points. Well, my tune changed when I drafted the application. I was about 20 point short. I wouldn't be able to sit for the July exam. A few weeks later, I had the pleasure of meeting a CMP at an ESSAE event. She generously offered to review my application and gave me tips on areas where I could potentially accrue additional points. I gave it another shot and came up with 93 points. Hooray! But, it was after the application deadline so I'd take the exam in February 2008.

In the meantime, I signed up for a CMP study group offered by MPI NENY. I can't stress the importance of participating in at least one of these groups. I actually participated in two separate study groups, something I would highly recommend to everyone because of the amount and intensity of the exam materials. The personal insights and information provided by the facilitators were truly invaluable to me. And, as a spectacular bonus, I developed extraordinary friendships with my fellow CMP candidates that will last a lifetime. I honestly believe I wouldn't have passed the exam without these two incredible support systems.

CIC's website answers the question "Why Become a CMP?" with recognition, competitive advantage, peer acceptance, salary enhancement, personal achievement and commitment. **While all of that is significant, the deep sense of pride and accomplishment I felt when I found out I actually passed was monumental.**

If the thought of CMP certification ever crossed your mind, if you have questions about the process, or would like help with the application, I strongly encourage you to contact any of the CMPs listed on MPI NENY's website. Reach out to one of us – I'm confident it will open a world of possibilities for you. It definitely has for me!

Phyllis M. Secor, CMP
NYS Funeral Directors Association
psecor@nysfda.org

CMP Status Forms Lifelong Friends

Career enhancement challenges bring camaraderie

with registration and lunch, a shotgun scramble start at 1:00 pm and a reception to follow.

So put your thinking caps on, and begin putting your foursomes together!

Suppliers sponsor a planner!

For more information please contact the tournament chair, **John Giordano of Plaza Meetings** via email at: john@plazameetings.com.

Upcoming International Events

The Gulf Meetings and Events Conference

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

April 5 - 6, 2008

The European Meetings and Events Conference

London, UK

April 18 - 20, 2008

Leaders Conference

Dallas, TX

Westin Park Central

June 20 - 22, 2008

World Education Congress

Las Vegas, NV

August 9 - 12, 2008

Welcome, New Members!



Marcy DeBiccari
Senior Meeting Planner
Sematech

Meghan Irrgang

To prospective CMP Candidates, my advice is to start the process now! Fill out the application, purchase the books, start studying, purchase plenty of index cards and, above all, take advantage of the WONDERFUL opportunity MPI NENY offers by joining the study groups when the time comes! We are so lucky to have this invaluable resource in New York State and I sincerely hope you will be as lucky as I was to not only reach the ultimate goal of achieving CMP status but especially building friendships with my fellow candidates that will last a lifetime!

My experience through the CMP process has been that of one of life's biggest challenges, high anxiety, wonderful camaraderie and lastly the wonderful feeling of success! I was one of the long distance participants of the group, the instructors and my fellow study partners always made me feel as if I were there with them! Their continuing support, mentoring and encouragement will never be forgotten. I definitely advise you to pick a partner, or four as I did, and together you will all enjoy the roller coaster ride to CMP success!

- Linda Persico, CMP

National Sales Manager

The Conference Center Niagara Falls

l.persico@niagarafalls-cc.com

www.niagarafalls-cc.com

Join MPI NENY = FREE Weekend Getaway!

Turning Stone Resort & Casino, May 3-4, 2008

All you have to do is ...

For **Meeting Planners** - **join between now and April 15, 2008** and you are eligible to attend our **Fabulous Getaway Weekend FREE** at the Turning Stone Resort & Casino on May 3-4, 2008. And, if another member of MPI NENY recruited you to join, you BOTH get to join us for this getaway!

Those eligible to attend will receive an invitation via email and information on how to make your reservations!

In addition - you will get **100 MPI NENY POINTS** for joining to be used at the MPI NENY Annual Meeting silent Auction in June 2008!

For more information contact **Gina Mintzer, CMP**, MPI NENY VP Membership 518-434-1217 x301, gmintzer@albany.org.

WANTED: Showcase Chairs

Positions open for MPI NENY Event Chairs - Apply Today!

The **Education Team** is currently accepting **Showcase Chair "applications" for the positions of Event Showcase Chair, Technology Showcase Chair and Ignite the Imagination/Hot Trends Chair for 2008/2009**. In order to apply you must be slightly insane, have 40 years of experience or more and be willing to donate your first born if the need arises.

Actually, becoming a chair is not that painful. Each of these positions require someone who has experience or the desire to gain experience in facilitating the work of volunteers, creativity, a desire to "WOW" our membership, the ability to

Student

Kaetelyn Kipp

Senior Administrative Assistant
Albany Molecular Research

Mary Anne Noonan

Director of Sales
Courtyard by Marriott

Gladys Roman

Director of Group Sales
The Riese Organization /
Hawaiian Tropic Zone

Kristy Yankelevitz

Assistant Director of Event
Planning
Marriott

Don't wait to get involved!

Boost your career and
increase your network by
joining the premier meeting
industry association today!

[Download the MPI
Membership Application Today!](#)

CMP Corner



CMP Question of the Month:

**The Convention & Visitors
Bureau may assist the
meeting professional in all of
the following areas EXCEPT:**

- A. Supplying a list of possible venues
- B. Recommending a particular company in the area
- C. Scheduling site inspections and appointments with possible outside vendors
- D. Supplying on-site registration support services to the meeting professional during their convention

**CMP Summer Exam
August 9, 2008**

organize work and skill at clearly communicating tasks and instructions to others.

You must be a chapter member and have a sense of humor.

These events are scheduled for the following:

- Ignite the Imagination – November 2008
- Technology Showcase – February 2009
- Event Showcase – May 2009

If you are interested in one of these positions and want more information about what is involved please contact **Julie Ann Price, Incoming Education VP**, at jprice@nysutmail.org or 518-213-6000 ext 6625.

MPI NENY 2008 Awards Program

Professional Excellence in the Meeting Industry

The Northeastern New York Chapter of Meeting Professionals International is pleased to announce its inaugural 2008 Chapter Awards Program, "**Professional Excellence in the Meeting Industry**". The awards will be presented at the 2008 Annual Meeting on June 12, 2008 at **Longfellow's Hotel** in Saratoga.

The following category is eligible for nominations:

Professional Excellence in the Meeting Industry

These awards (i.e., one for Planner and one for Supplier) are presented annually to a member of MPI NENY in recognition of outstanding association/industry contributions, leadership and professionalism. **The awards are based on both international and chapter participation, presentations relating to the industry in general, articles written in the hospitality industry press, community service, and industry recognition previously received.** The awards recognize a career of involvement, commitment and achievement.

To submit nominations download the [Award Nomination Form](#) and fax it no later than Friday, May 9, 2008 to:

Judy Rucinski, CMP

NYSUT
800 Troy Schenectady Rd
Latham, NY 12110
518-213-6000 x6627
Fax: 518-213-6461
jrucinsk@nysutmail.org

Meet the Members of MPI NENY!

Linda Roth

Hilton Garden Inn Albany Airport

Deadlines

Application: April 9

Registration: June 11

Examination: August 9

Please visit the CIC website for information on exam locations and costs associated with each application or registration.

Exam materials and applications are now available for download at:

www.conventionindustry.org

CMP QOTM Answer: B

Are You Stressed Out?

One-third of US residents are living with extreme stress and nearly half (48%) believe that their stress has increased over the past five years. And anxiety is taking its toll on people - contributing to health problems, poor relationships and lost productivity at work, according to a late-2007 survey by the American Psychological Association (APA).

Money and work continue as the leading causes of stress for three quarters of Americans, a dramatic increase over the 59% reporting the same sources of stress in 2006.

Nearly half of all Americans report that stress has a negative impact on both their personal and professional lives. About one-third (31%) of employed adults have difficulty managing work and family responsibilities, and 35% cite job interference with family or personal time as a significant source of stress.

Stress causes more than half of Americans (54%) to fight with people close to them. One in four people report that they have been alienated from friends or family members.



How did you get started in the industry?

My first experience was as a tour operator with **Upstate Tours in Saratoga Springs**. Originally, I was hired to answer phones and worked my way to Vice President as the company grew quickly. From there I spent eleven years as Sales Manager with the Saratoga Convention & Tourism Bureau. From there I went on to the Albany-Colonie Chamber of Commerce as Director of Membership Sales.

What is a tool or resource you find indispensable?

A good, old fashioned wall calendar. I look at it a million times a day!

Do you have any personal motto or quote concerning our industry?

Just the basics.....**Under promise but over deliver and be available for your clients**. There is nothing worse than making promises that are not kept. Also, making sales and then never again being available personally to the client.

How do you anticipate your MPI membership helping you professionally or how has it helped you professionally?

It pays off in so many ways. Of course, there are always the connections that are made via networking. Relationships that last forever. **Certainly, it is true that people do business with people they know and can trust**. I do business today with clients I have done business with fifteen years ago on other careers. Also, with new people entering the industry every day, the experience and knowledge to be shared among our peers is invaluable.

Tell about a great challenge you have faced and overcome.

Changing careers from the CVB to the Albany-Colonie Chamber of Commerce and then to the amazing hotel industry was huge. Although I worked closely with the hotels in Saratoga Springs for many years and knew sales, I did not know how much I did not know about directing the sales effort of a hotel in this very competitive market. Needless to say, I have learned and am continuing to learn daily.

Gina Potfora

American Council of Engineering Companies of New York

How did you get started in the industry? I worked for a local Chamber of Commerce and did some event planning then in 1999 I was hired as Director of Member Services for ACEC New York.

What is a tool or resource you find indispensable? My tree. I am always connected to my calendar, contacts and e-mails.



Can you give a piece of advice for someone just starting out in our industry?

When having to make a snap decision, listen to your gut instinct, you are usually always correct. Utilize your network of fellow professionals. I have found that people

because of stress, with 8% connecting stress to divorce or separation.

Stress Affects Health

Twenty-eight percent of US residents say they are managing their stress extremely well. However, many report experiencing physical symptoms (77%) and psychological symptoms (73%) related to stress in the past month.

Physical symptoms include fatigue, headache, upset stomach, muscle tension, change in appetite, teeth grinding, change in sex drive, and feeling dizzy.

Psychological symptoms include irritability or anger, nervousness, lack of energy and wanting to cry. In addition, almost half (48%) of Americans report lying awake at night due to stress.

Motivating Factors

While many US residents recognize that stress has a negative impact on their health, they may lack the motivation to make lifestyle and behavior changes.

Only 35% report that they would modify their behavior following the diagnosis of a chronic condition. Primary motivators include a desire to feel better (60%), a desire to reduce stress (45%) and a desire to improve self-image or self-esteem (41%).

Encouragement from a spouse or partner would motivate 38% to make behavioral changes!

The Meeting Professional
March 2008

We Want You!

in our industry are always ready and willing to help.

What is your favorite Internet site?

Travelocity – I always read reviews of what regular travelers have to say about a hotel or resort I am looking at for a conference.

How do you anticipate your MPI membership helping you professionally or how has it helped you professionally?

MPI Membership is an important tool. **It keeps you connected to suppliers and meeting professionals in your area and their knowledge is invaluable.** I always come away with at least one tip from the programs or make sure I meet someone new.

Tell about a great challenge you have faced and overcome.

In 2001 I brought a group of members to the Bahamas just one day after Hurricane Michelle. The resort assured us that it was okay for us to come but, when we arrived we realized the resort was not up to par. Thanks in part to my great members, the engineers embraced the many inconveniences of the resort and turned it into a learning experience about disaster recovery. **After negotiating with the resort they ended up offering our members a free vacation for each person to make up for our inconvenience.**



If you would like to be featured in a future newsletter, download the [Spotlight](#) Questionnaire and return with a digital photo and company logo to **Megan Kiessling** at megan@sitesolutionsworldwide.com.

MPI and American Express Study Forecasts Solid 2008 for Meeting Industry

FutureWatch 2008



Presented by



FutureWatch 2008, the definitive market trends study for the global meeting and event planning industry, has been released, and meeting professionals expect steady attendance and budgets in the coming year. The sixth-annual international study, sponsored by American Express (NYSE: AXP and conducted by MPI), **surveyed 1,643 meeting and event professionals and suppliers from around the world – the largest response in the last three years to a FutureWatch study.** The study was conducted from Oct. 22 – Nov. 7, 2007 and was open to all MPI members to participate. A copy of the study can be found at www.mpiweb.org.

The study was just recently presented at PEC-NA in Houston. A copy of the presentation is in the [FutureWatch discussion community](#).

Among its chief findings, **FutureWatch 2008** also found:

Meeting attendance to rise along with web-based compliments



**Are you creative?
Innovative? Motivated?
Are you ready to make a
difference?**

Join a Chapter Committee Team Today! If you are interested in learning more about Chapter Teams, please contact any of the following:

MEMBERSHIP

Gina Mintzer, CMP, Director of Sales
Albany County CVB
518.434.1217 x301
gmintzer@albany.org

EDUCATION

Cindy Sullivan, CMP, Sales Manager
The Saratoga Hilton
518.693.1002
csullivan@luxuryresorts.com

ADMINISTRATION

Ed Barone, President
Souders Promotions
518.452.3000
ed@souders1918.com

COMMUNICATIONS

Vanessa LaClair, CMP, Membership Services & Events Coordinator
Independent Power Producers of NY
518.436.3749
vanessa@ippny.org

FINANCE

Tim McCullough, Sales Manager
Crowne Plaza Albany Hotel
518.427.3008
tmccullough@lodqian.com

Got News?

We'd love to hear from you! Please e-mail your announcements to [Vanessa LaClair](mailto:Vanessa.LaClair@ippny.org), CMP, VP Communications.



[Click here](#) to view the MPI NENY Newsletter Production Schedule.

If you are having trouble viewing this newsletter with graphics, please visit

Meeting and event professionals expect a 19% increase in meeting attendance in 2008, indicating that face-to-face interaction is still critical to the bottom line and an essential part of building brand ambassadors. Webcasts and other technologies allowing for remote participation in meetings also are expected to rise, with one-third of planners expecting webcasts to be a more frequent feature of live meetings in 2008.

Budget growth predicted despite worldwide economic concerns

Although study respondents expressed concern about an economic downturn in 2008, 27% of corporate planners predict a rise in budgets, placing value on teambuilding even in tough times.

Rapid move toward globalization expected, not just discussed

Respondents' predictions reflect an industry that is globalizing rapidly. More than half of organizations with offices in six or more countries expect expanded operations in the next year, compared to 4.5 % of respondents whose organizations had not yet entered the international market.

Industry is going "green"

Interest in environmental sustainability has not bypassed the meeting planning industry. A growing number of professionals, 19% overall, list conservation and environmental concerns among the top three trends affecting their work.

***FutureWatch 2008** is further evidence that there's no substitute for the power of human connections through live interaction, says **Bruce MacMillan, president and CEO of MPI**. This year's study showed that while meeting and event professionals are embracing technology, its greater role is in enhancing events, not replacing them.*

17th Annual MPI Greater New York / Tourisme Quebec Golf & Tennis Outing - Monday, July 14, 2008



The 17th Annual MPIGNY/Tourisme Quebec Golf & Tennis Outing will be held at the **Hyatt Regency Long Island and Hamlet Wind Watch Golf & Country Club** in Hauppauge, Long Island. For the past few years this has been one of MPIGNY's well attended events. We don't want you to miss out on this fun, action packed day!

Whether you are a seasoned player or a beginner, this is the area's premier event for networking with other meeting professionals. If you don't want to play golf or tennis, there is an opportunity to register for the Golf Clinic or Pool Package.

Be a Sponsor... opportunities still available for your company to get exposure in front of meeting planners from the area. For information contact **Cosimo Bruzzese** Cosimo@briggsnyc.com.

www.mpiny.org to download a PDF version.

Quick Links...

[Our Website](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[CMP Information](#)

[Chapter Leadership](#)

Be a Participant... sign up now to put a foursome together to play golf or perhaps you prefer to play tennis or enjoy the pool/spa package.

There will also be the **Pre-Outing Reception on Sunday, July 13**. MPIGNY has arranged for a block of rooms on Saturday and Sunday at a rate of \$179.00 per night. The cutoff date for the special rates is June 12, 2008.

Bus transportation will be available for our participants from the Grand Hyatt in NYC to the Hamlet Wind Watch on Monday July 14, 2008.

Don't let this great opportunity pass you by... ACT NOW!

For more information go to the MPIGNY website at www.mpigny.org, click on July 14 from the calendar of events to download the forms. If you have any questions call or email Kathie Stapleton at 914-762-1456; kstapleton@mpigny.org.

We hope to see you on the golf course or tennis courts!!!

