

MEETING NEWS



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President's Message

By Carrie Hillenbrandt, CMP



Above: Progress at the Troy Hilton Garden Inn

Dear Chapter Members:

We hear you!

Thank you to everyone that responded to our chapter's need assessment survey. Here are some interesting highlights.....did you know that 42% of the respondents were CMP's and 34% of you have been in the business for more than 10 years? 84% of our respondents joined our chapter because of the monthly education AND 52% suggested on line courses as a way to stay current! Based on this survey, your board is looking into online course education. Many surrounding chapters are offering webinars on various topics. Partnering with other chapters would give our

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members a chance to really enhance their education for minimal cost. As a board, we recognize that we have many experienced members that are looking for more educational content. Updating our web site and making webinars an option will be goals for 2009 for sure!

Speaking of education, don't forget to check out the Meet Different Conference in February 2009 in Atlanta. There are still some great discounts available for pre-registration. For more information, check out the web site at www.mpiweb.org.

Finally, I would like to extend my best wishes to all of our members and their families for a fun filled Holiday Season!

Annual Membership Appreciation & Recruitment Drive

By: MPI NENY

MPI Members are both colleagues and friends, and we are so glad to have you as both! This is our annual event to THANK YOU for your membership and participation in the MPI Northeastern New York chapter.

- MPI NENY is about YOU! Hear about what's new and exciting from an International level, and why you are part of one of the Best MPI Chapters.
- Learn about the upcoming Education Programs. Benefits of membership and networking opportunities will become evident at this member-only event.
- This is also the kick off of the Annual Membership Recruitment Drive. Learn about this year's reward for sharing the benefits of membership in MPI.

We are also offering 2 information sessions prior to the main program:

Thinking about getting your CMP designation? Join us for an information session about what's involved in the process of obtaining this certification.

New to MPI, or looking to get more involved? Members are invited to a detailed Orientation to learn some tips for making the most of your membership.

Following the Main Program, you are all invited to the Reception hosted by 74 State.

Please see *Annual Membership* on page 4

Ignite Event a Big Success

By Sylvia Daigle – Lane Press

Approximately 100 attendees joined together on Tuesday, November 18 at the GE Theatre at Proctors for a social and educational afternoon. This venue was fabulous as many were introduced to their new theatre and reception area. Total Events, of course, used their usual talent to make it very charming and quaint.

Three sessions were presented to ignite the imagination:

Current Happenings in Green Meetings was presented with a panelists of “experts” in their field (Rachel Alcaro, CMP, Syracuse CVB; Sharon O Cohen, Albany Marriott Hotel; Philip Morris, CEO, Proctors Theatre; and Michelle Scott, CMP, Gatherings by Design) to share ideas and implementations that they have taken to promote the green meeting initiative. This topic provided a lot of interest and feedback from the **audience**.

Cindy Sullivan, CMP, educated attendees on the newly launched MPI Virtual World. You can explore and learn the capabilities of this totally new interactive virtual world conference tool by logging on to www.virtualbeginnings.com/start/mpl.

Renowned speaker, Joan Eisenstodt, CMP presented “Connecting the Dots to the Industry’s Future” live via the virtual world website. She addressed many issues such as climate change, economics and changing demographics that impact us individually and our industries and what we can do to manage these changes.

Attendees wrapped up the event enjoying many treats by Classe’ Catering and visiting with exhibitors.

Many thanks to our sponsors for their support: “Bomb Level” - BBL Hospitality; “Dynamite Level” - Lane Press, Long Island Convention and Visitors Bureau, Schenectady County Chamber of Commerce; “Firecracker Level” – Albany Marriott Hotel, Classe’ Catering, Crowne Plaza Albany Hotel, Desmond Hotel and Conference Center, Mohonk Mountain House, The Porches Inn, Red Lion Inn, Souders Promotions and Total Events.

Kudos should also be given for all the time and energy put into the event by the committee: Robin Blaauboer, CMP, Pitney Bowes MapInfo; Sylvia Daigle, Lane Press of Albany; Debby Goedeke, Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau; Julie Ann Price, CMP, MHA, NYS United Teachers; and Michelle Scott, CMP, Gatherings by Design, LLC.

Meet Jennifer Jacobson

By Megan Kiessling, CMP

Jennifer Jacobson

Universal Orlando Resort

What steps have you taken to evolve your career in the meetings industry? Or plan to take? I’ve always taken measures to become involved with industry organizations – such as MPI to continue learning. It’s a great way to stay on top of industry trends such as food and beverage which can ultimately find their way into our events and can have a fabulous impact when combined with our one-of-a-kind attractions and world-class entertainment at Universal Orlando.

Describe an unusual meeting challenge and how you overcame that? I’m on the events team at Universal Orlando and we handle groups of 20-20,000. One of our clients hosted an event for 4000

guests that required several private VIP/sponsor areas for invitation only guests within the overall event. Our CityWalk venue with its diverse locations became the perfect solution. The event for the overall group encompassed all of the downstairs of our CityWalk venues along with a party in the streets and the upstairs of each area became the sponsor/VIP locations with enhanced food and beverage. Each venue also featured scheduled shows of tribute acts such as Neil Diamond, Rod Stewart, ABBA and the night concluded with a name act – the B-52’s on the plaza stage. What a great evening! This particular group held their event with us for each of the three years their meeting was in Orlando – a true testament that we found a great solution for their particular objectives. This is something we strive to do whatever the group size.

Please see *Meet Jacobson* on page 5

“I’m on the events team at Universal Orlando and we handle groups of 20 to 20,000.”



Above: Jennifer Jacobson

Meet Renee Kelly

By Megan Kiessling, CMP

Renee Kelly

Catering and Sales Manager
The Clarion Hotel of Albany

What steps have you taken to evolve your career in the meetings industry? Or plan to take? My move to the hospitality industry two years ago was very strategic.

I was a writer for many years with a steady job in public relations, where my responsibilities included planning and coordinating photo shoots and television commercials. But I also wrote entertaining and wedding planning articles on a freelance-basis for some regional magazines. I realized, as I interviewed different planners, that some of the skills that I had were transferable, so I started talking to different people in the hospitality industry to see how I could make a career change. I was on the brink of my 30th birthday and ready for a career that was more fun and more people-oriented. I approached many professionals in the local hospitality industry for informational interviews and found several who were kind enough to share their time and wisdom with me.

Kevin Sykes, from the Hall of Springs is the one who suggested that I take some classes at Schenectady County Community College since I didn't have any background in food and beverage. Megan Kiessling took me to my first MPI and ESSAE events, and Gina Mintzer is the one who told me that the Clarion Hotel of Albany would be a good place to "cut my teeth."

Green Meetings Update: Sustainability

By Michelle Scott, CMP

Last year I presented at MPI NENY's Ignite the Imagination event and gave attendees literally dozens of simple suggestions that both planners and suppliers can do to make their meetings more sustainable. I asked each person in the room at that event to commit to pick – (not all) – just three of the suggestions of their own choosing to begin implementing throughout the course of the year.

This year once again I had the opportunity to participate on a Green Panel at MPI's Ignite Your Imagination event. Knowing I would likely be presenting to many of the same people from the year before, I was curious to see how many of the those attendees had initiated the three things from the lists suggested a year ago. Anxious to find out, I started my presentation by asking for a show of hands in response to my question. I thought that this would spark some lively discussion and wonderful sharing of ideas. To my dismay, two hands raised. I know that the number of planners nationally incorporating sustainable practices in their events is over one third and the number of venues incorporating some sustainable practices is even greater, so naturally I was surprised.

This experience brought to mind a little story that was posted in my



Left: Renee Kelly

What is your favorite hobby or past time and how have you incorporated that into your career if at all? I enjoy following style trends in food and beverage, color and material, and I try to incorporate that into my work as much as possible.

Describe an unusual meeting challenge and how you overcame that? The greatest logistical challenge I've encountered so far was transporting 1,200 guests on 22 buses from

three different locations and making sure that they all arrived at the same place on time. I had the cell phone numbers of the lead bus driver from each of the three locations and was in constant communication with them and with my co-workers at the other locations who were responsible for making sure that none of the guests were left behind. It was stressful, but it all came together.

Of course, working in a facility with seven different meeting spaces presents challenges on a daily basis, as we accommodate several clients at once. As a service provider, part of my job is to make the planner's job easier. What do you do when one group comes with more people than they guaranteed, another group is dealing with malfunctioning audio visual equipment, and a third group wants to move up their lunch service by 30 minutes?

Please see *Meet Renee Kelly* on page 4

workplace several years ago. Perhaps you are familiar with it...

This is a little story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought that Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

- ANONYMOUS

I'm sure it's no surprise to any of us that Americans take top place as the most wasteful people on the planet. In fact in a recent 20/20 report, Elizabeth Vargas reported that if everyone in the world lived like we do, we would need not one,... not two,... not even three would do...; but we would need four planet earths to accommodate the resources and waste disposal to sustain us all. Let's pause and just take in the enormity of that truth. Now consider this.... According to the U.S.E.P.A. (environmental protection agency), the conference and convention industry is the second most wasteful industry in the

Please see *Green Update* on page 4

Annual Membership from page 1**AGENDA**

- 1:45pm - Registration
- 2:00pm - CMP Information Session
- 2:30pm - Orientation
- 3:30pm - Program
- 5:00pm – Reception

REGISTER

This event is **FREE** to all members.
Bring a potential member as your guest for \$40.

WHERE

74 State
74 State Street - Albany, NY 12207

Meet Renee Kelly from page 3

You roll out tables and chairs, grab your best technical staff person, and notify the chef—quickly and with a smile!

How do you personally stay organized and what tips can you impart to others? If you come to my house now, you'll see a whiteboard in the kitchen with a colored marker assigned to each family member—it's an old trick that works for me. At the office, I keep a three-month calendar on the wall with all upcoming events listed on it and color coded. By visualizing the next three months, I can better determine which tasks to tackle on a daily basis.

What would our readers be surprised to learn about you? That I don't text! And I only use my cell to call people and check voicemail. In fact, if you go through my purse, you'll find that I actually carry a date book and pen (gasp!).

What advice would you give to someone thinking about entering the meetings industry? Ask questions. Talk to people in the industry about what they do and how they got started. Ask them what they would do if they wanted to break in to the industry today.

Two years later, I'm still convinced that Tod Hanlon, General Manager of the Clarion, and John Burger, Director of Sales, hired me based on my enthusiasm rather than my experience!

Destination – CMP

To get to the next level you need your CMP designation.
Don't Delay!

Congratulations! You have chosen Education as your destination by expressing an interest in becoming a Certified Meeting Professional (CMP). Your local MPI chapter is here to help with your pursuit. In follow up to our September Destination Education event we are holding a CMP informational session in conjunction with the Annual Membership Thank You in January 15 at 2 PM.

Who should attend?

- Individuals seeking general interest in the designation
- Individuals planning to apply for the July 2009 exam (Feb. 25, 2009 deadline)
- Individuals interested in MPI-NENY study group participation as an exam resource

To sign up, visit www.mpineny.org and register for the Member Thank You event. This information session is for members only.

Upcoming CMP Exam

Deadlines

**February 25, 2009 for
July 2009 Exam**

Green Update from page 3

entire U.S. So to extrapolate and really put this on point – we as professionals of this industry are among the most wasteful beings on the entire planet.

As planners and suppliers, steeped in the predictable comfort of doing things the way they have always been done, we tell ourselves that certainly anything we do cannot possibly make a significant difference. But we would be wrong. In the wise words of Ghandi - "Be the change you wish to see in the world". The next time we think that each of us cannot possibly make a difference in this abominable beast of a problem that we have created on this planet, we need to think again. Because as the story tells us - If Somebody doesn't do it, Nobody will.

Michelle Scott, CMP
Gatherings by Design, LLC
msscott@gatheringsbydesign.com

Meet Jacobson from page 2

How is technology helping or changing your business? What is your favorite new technology or device? Technology has allowed us to become more creative in communicating with our clients as well as providing us with the ability to respond to requests very quickly and be available to our clients. In addition – technology within our theme park attractions continues to allow us to provide second to none experiences for our guests – such as with our new attraction The Simpsons Ride which was voted by Theme Park Insider.com as the “Best New Theme Park Attraction” worldwide for 2008!

How has the recent hotel chain consolidation or airline bankruptcy affected your business? One of the best parts of my job is being able to partner with my counterparts at all of the Orlando hotels as we have many shared clients. Whichever hotel the meeting is being held at we partner with them to provide off-site events, team building and/or theme park tickets for their groups. Orlando as a destination continues to offer great airline lift and is seen as an affordable option which is helpful during the current economy.

How do you personally stay organized and what tips can you impart to others? I'm a Virgo – so I am organized in my own “special” way! Just kidding – but seriously our team works with over 1000 event clients a year – so we have to be organized. It helps to stay on top of the email – keep the in-box manageable and tackle the small items quickly to get them off my plate.

What advice would you give to someone thinking about entering the meetings industry? Do it – jump in with both feet and get involved! From the warmth and expertise of its people, the continued education, the travel, meetings and event experiences this is a great industry to be a part of.

Taste of the Northeast – Chicken & Figs

By Leslie Miller

The View Restaurant - Mirror Lake Inn
Philosophy: Elegant Comfort Foods

Chef Sorgule holds a Master's Degree from Rochester Institute of Technology, is a Certified Culinary Educator through the American Culinary Federation and an inducted member of the American Academy of Chefs. He has spent more than 40 years in the Restaurant Industry including 26 as Chef Instructor and Dean of Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management at Paul Smith's College.

A Gold Medal winner at the 1988 Culinary Olympics in Frankfurt, Germany and the American Culinary Federation's 2001 Culinary Educator of the Year, Sorgule is now the Executive Chef at the AAA Four-Diamond Mirror Lake Inn Resort in Lake Placid, New York.

The Mirror Lake Inn is world-renown as an Adirondack destination and has been awarded the Four-Diamond distinction for 23 consecutive years. Chef Sorgule's style of cooking relies heavily on the classics with a modern interpretation. “I believe that those foundational, well-established methods of cooking are ones that our guests have a long-term relationship with. This type of food brings back fond memories for all who partake.”

Sorgule continues to emphasize teaching in his kitchen. Nearly all of his staff are culinary graduates, current students, members of his apprenticeship program or serious graduates of the “school of hard knocks”. “It is a pleasure to come to work each day and watch this group of dedicated individuals work their magic”, said Sorgule.

CHICKEN AND FIGS

PREP TIME: 60 minutes

COOK TIME: 20 minutes

ASSEMBLY: 5 minutes

SERVES: 4

PROCEDURE

Dredge the chicken breasts in seasoned flour
Heat the clarified butter and oil and light brown the chicken on both sides

Discard the oil/butter

Blanch the carrots, rutabaga and pearl onions

Deglaze the hot chicken pan with brandy and allow to evaporate

Add the chicken stock, vegetables, figs and chicken

Cover and place in a 350 degree oven for 10 minutes

Return to the stove, uncover and reduce till the sauce coats the **back of a spoon**



INGREDIENTS

8 halves- Boneless, Skinless Chicken Breasts
Seasoned Flour 1 cup
Clarified Butter ¼ cup
Vegetable Oil 2 T.
Peeled Pearl Onions 8 each, Split in half
Garlic Cloves 4 Sliced thin
Rutabaga 1 cup Medium Dice
Carrots 1 cup Medium Dice
Dried Figs 1 cup Split in half
Brandy 1 oz.
Chicken Stock 1 ½ cups
Fig Molasses ¼ cup
Chopped Parsley 3 T. Chop fine

Please see *Recipe* on page 8

Happy Holidays – Happy New Year!

Holiday Parties

North Country Holiday Bed & Breakfast Tour
Fort William Henry Resort, December 5-7, 2008
 Package includes: 1 night accommodation in Grand Hotel

Fireside Wine and Cheese Reception with two Tickets to Holiday Tour and Breakfast Buffet overlooking Lake George for just \$162.50 for two people (does not include taxes or gratuities). Plus a portion of proceeds will benefit Habitat For Humanity! Click for more information!

Mohonk Mountain House: Celebrate the Holidays at Our House
 Book your holiday party at our House December 1– 22, 2008 and experience Victorian Yuletide splendor at it's finest. No matter how large or small, your company can celebrate this festive time of year with a special overnight package available midweek (Sunday through Thursday).

This group holiday special includes the following: Charming overnight room accommodation, Dinner, breakfast and lunch, Complimentary turndown service, Afternoon Tea and Cookies, Most resort activities, and valet parking. This group package rate begins at \$229* per person based on double occupancy. *Subject to availability. Taxes and a 15% gratuity additional. Private dining and private cocktail reception space for an additional charge based on availability. For more information or to book your company's holiday party, please call 845-256-2755.

Can't stay overnight? Join us for one of our Holiday House Parties on Thursday, December 4th, Wednesday, December 10th, or Thursday, December 11th. Your company can enjoy a savory array of hors d'oeuvres, a four-course meal, and a live band to dance the evening away. The cost is just \$68 per person and includes valet parking, taxes, and gratuity.

Space is limited so call 845-256-2099 to book your holiday party now!

New Years Eve Parties

Two Incredible Offers from the **Albany Crowne Plaza**

New Years Eve 2009 Party starts at 7:00pm
 Food is served 7:00pm – 10:00pm
 Passed Cocktails & Hors d'oeuvres
 Carver Station & Blini Station
 Champagne Toast at Midnight
 DJ spinning the hottest tunes
 Buffet Breakfast on New Years Day 6:30am – 12:00pm
 With Overnight Accommodation per Couple \$209.00
 Without Overnight Accommodation \$40.00 per person

Or select the **Albany Crowne Plaza Romance Package**
 Bottle of Champagne upon arrival
 Strawberries and Cream
 Buffet Breakfast for Two
 With Overnight Accommodation per Couple \$149.00
 For Reservations for either package please Call (518) 427-3038

First Night Package from Residence Inn by Marriott Saratoga Springs

Experience 14,000 Revelers, 400 Artists, 40 Venues, and Fireworks Show at Midnight. All of the music venue admissions are included with the purchase of a \$15 button purchase benefiting the YMCA of Saratoga, and kids 5 and under are free!

Suite rate is \$189, plus 13% tax for up to 4 people in a suite and includes a hot breakfast buffet on New Years Day. Hotel will provide complimentary shuttle to and from the festivities in downtown Saratoga Springs.

Call 518-584-9600 for reservations!

Call for Nominations! Board Elections in January 2009

In January you will receive formal informational on nominating someone for our Board positions that will be available in June. If developing your leadership skills interests you or if you are looking for ways to get more out of your membership dollars, **I encourage you to get involved and help MPI NENY continue to grow**

The following Board of Directors' positions are available:

President-Elect
VP of Membership

Take advantage of this opportunity to experience working with a team of professionals who are charting the course for our chapter.

Personally speaking, it has been such a rewarding experience for me in both my professional and personal growth. If you would like more information on any of these positions, please feel free to contact me.

Deadline for nominations Wednesday, January 14th!

Mike Snyder, CMP
 Chapter Past President
Michael.Snyder@ogs.state.ny.us

Welcome, New Members!

Ronald Goulet

Professional Development Program

Jo Ann Upper

Sales Manager

Mount Snow-Grand Summit Resort

Jessica Anna Zaccari

Conference Sales Manager

Jiminy Creek Mountain Resort

Referral: **Janelle LaFleche**

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!

www.mpiweb.org

Recipe from page 5

Assemble on plate by distributing the vegetables among 4 plates, top with 2 pieces of chicken each, mask with a small amount of sauce, drizzle each plate with fig molasses and garnish with chopped parsley

WINE RECOMMENDATIONS

This dish will hold up very well to a Pinot Noir from California or Oregon State and equally well with a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc

-Leslie Forbert Miller

Director of Sales

Residence Inn by Marriott ~ Saratoga Springs

Sales office: 518-886-0656

Holiday Facts

By Phyllis Secor, CMP

The word Christmas is Old English, a contraction of Christ's Mass.

Electric lights for trees were first used in 1895.

If you received all of the gifts in the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas", you would receive 364 presents.

In 1843, "A Christmas Carol" was written by Charles Dickens in just six weeks.

Coca Cola was the first beverage company to use Santa for a winter promotion.

In Mexico, wearing red underwear on New Year's Eve is said to bring new love in the upcoming year.

December 24, 1931: New York City construction workers, at the future site of Rockefeller Center, dragged in a 12-foot Christmas tree and decorated it with tin cans and paper. The first official Rockefeller Center tree, with 700 blue and white lights, appeared two years later.

Hanukkah, the "Festival of Lights," starts on the 25th day of the Jewish calendar month of Kislev and lasts for eight days and nights. In 2008 Hanukkah begins at sundown on December 21. With blessings, games, and festive foods, Hanukkah celebrates the triumphs--both religious and military--of ancient Jewish heroes.

The Menorah

The lighting of the menorah, known in Hebrew as the hanukiya, is the most important Hanukkah tradition. A menorah is a candle stand with nine branches. Usually eight candles - one for each day of Hanukah - are of the same height, with a taller one in the middle, the Shamash ("servant"), which is used to light the others. Each evening of Hanukkah, one more candle is lit, with a special blessing.

The menorah symbolizes the burning light in the temple, as well as marking the eight days of the Hanukkah festival. Some say it also celebrates the light of freedom won by the Maccabees for the Jewish people.

The Dreidel: Long a favorite Hanukkah toy, the dreidel once had a serious purpose. When the Syrians forbid study of the Torah, Jews who studied in secret kept spinning tops "sivovons or dreidels" on hand.

We Want YOU!

**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:

VP MEMBERSHIP

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Got NEWS?

We'd love to hear from you! Please e-mail your announcements to **Vanessa LaClair**, CMP, VP Communications – vanessa@ippny.org

Click here: ([Production Schedule](#)) to view the 2008-2009 MPI NENY Newsletter Production Schedule.

If you are having trouble viewing this newsletter with graphics, please visit www.mpineny.org to download a PDF version.