



SGMP President Donna Carey (R) accepts excellence award from SGTP President Jackye Alton.

Nominations Open for 2003-2005 National Board Positions

Looking for leaders! Nominations are now being accepted for the 2003-2005 SGMP National Board. SGMP has devoted considerable time and resources the past few years in leadership development, and we hope the fruits of these efforts will be realized as members step forward to be considered for the next SGMP leadership team.

The term of office will run from July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2005. The National Board meets five to six times a year, usually for two days over a weekend, at various locations across the country. The Board accomplishes much of its work between meetings. While a position on the SGMP National Board requires a considerable commitment of time and energy, you will find the experience rewarding.

Nominations are currently being accepted for the following positions:

- President: Government Meeting Planner
- 1st Vice President: Government Meeting Planner
- 2nd Vice President: Supplier or Contract Planner
- Secretary: Government Meeting Planner or Contract Planner
- Treasurer: Supplier or Contract Planner
- Directors (3): (1) Government Planner; (1) Supplier Planner; and (3) Government Meeting Planner/Contract Planner/Supplier

To be eligible for nomination a candidate must be a member in good standing for one year prior to nomination. A member in good standing is one whose dues are paid and with no break in membership.

If you wish to run for one of these positions or wish to nominate someone, obtain a nomination packet with detailed instructions by contacting SGMP Headquarters Office, Kristin Baucom; 703-549-0892; Fax: 703-540-0708; Kristin.Baucom@worldnet.att.net.

If you have any questions about the nominations and election process please contact Lynette I. Schick, CMP, Immediate Past National President, Nominations and Elections Chair, at 303-692-2101, e-mail Lynette.Schick@state.co.us.

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Completed nomination forms must be received at SGMP Headquarters or postmarked no later than November 30, 2002

A Message from the President: Change Can be a Very Good Thing

By Donna Carey

About 10 years ago, the Society of Government Meeting Professionals (SGMP) changed their name from *planner* to *professional*. It was a good change. We are all professionals – planner and supplier alike – whose common ground is planning and servicing government meetings. Over the last few years, however, I often wonder if we might be a stronger organization if we look at another change to the Association of Government Meeting Professionals (AGMP).

I like the new name. Taking our name listing to the front of the telephone book is a good thing. There are thousands of associations; perhaps if one were looking to find a group of government meeting professionals, he or she might look under association. How many would think of society? Webster's dictionary describes association as an organization of persons having common purpose, fellowship, partnership, and a connection between ideas. Society is a group of persons forming a single community, all people collectively; an organized group with some interest in common; and the wealthy, fashionable class. Hmmm, I think I am beginning to like this association name.

About 10 years ago, SGMP used to have the colors of their logo in burgundy. Seeming somewhat drab, the National Board suggested and the membership voted to change the colors to teal and purple. This past year, we featured red, white, and blue on our membership directory and the response was overwhelming.

Last year, we faced a horrible attack on our country. This has brought us closer together and eager to wave our flags. We have all become more patriotic and proud to be an American. It is an awesome feeling! This makes me wonder; perhaps now is a good time to replace the teal and purple with the colors we are so proud of, red, white, and blue.

Changing our name to the Association of Government Meeting Professionals and changing our colors to red, white, and blue? It is something for all of us to ponder. Let me know your thoughts.

The Buckeye Chapter Success: Show Me the Planner!

Meeting planners working for the state of Ohio are not in any specific classification. This makes it difficult to target meeting planners based on their job titles in order to get information to them about SGMP.

In an effort to reach meeting planners, a letter was distributed to the appointing authorities of all state agencies explaining the benefits of belonging to SGMP. Included in this letter was a copy of the Buckeye Chapter brochure. Recipients were asked

to forward the information to all meeting and event planners within their agencies.

The results were impressive. Chapter meeting attendance increased from an average of 31 attendees prior to the letter launch, to an average of 40 attendees. Membership increased from 44 members to 73 members, with at least 10 members-in-waiting. And, eight new members joined the chapter, all from one state agency. Congratulations to Buckeye for their membership efforts that paid off!

Government Meeting Professional is published six times a year by the Society of Government Meeting Professionals, a national organization of meeting managers and suppliers. Send all suggestions and inquiries to: Society of Government Meeting Professionals, 908 King Street, Lower Level, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 549-0892; fax (703) 549-0708. All members are encouraged to submit articles for publication. Articles submissions should be sent to Lynnette Simpson at LynnetteLy@aol.com.

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Newsletter of the Year and Program of the Year: Submit the best!

The Society of Government Meeting Professionals would like to encourage all chapters to participate in the following prestigious competitions. Plan to attend the National Conference May 21 - 25, 2003 to hear the NOY and POY!

Newsletter of the Year 2002 Award

By Kit Gonzales, Newsletter Committee Chair

It is my pleasure to introduce the Newsletter of the Year Competition for 2002, which recognizes excellence in communication. As a member, I believe chapter newsletters are the most visible, tangible, and consistent link with its members, and serves as a primary vehicle of communication. As the committee chair, I believe this is one of the National Conference's most prestigious and coveted awards. Last year, we received a record-tying number of entries and this year I look forward to receiving more entries, breaking that record and setting a new standard.

The competition encourages chapters to submit three of their best newsletters to be judged alongside other chapters' offerings. The committee scores newsletters based on content, form, and frequency. This year a new scoring element for electronic submissions will be added. Winners will be announced at the Educational Conference in Orlando, Florida in May 2003. Cash prizes will be given; \$300 (first place), \$200 (second place), and \$100 (third place).

The committee represents the best of the Society of Government Meeting Professionals with a balanced mix of suppliers, contract planners, and government planners. All members volunteer their time to read and score each of the entries with the goal of finding the best of the best. It will not be easy, but it will be fun! Volunteers are needed. Please let your chapter president know as soon as possible if you are interested.

Your chapter president has the entry information, so accept the challenge and enter! Reap the following benefits for your chapter:

- win your hard-working newsletter committee some much-deserved recognition and possible prize money.
- show off your pride of membership in SGMP by sharing the quality of information your chapter disseminates to members.
- support our organization's goal of professional recognition in the industry and increased membership involvement.

If you have any questions, please contact Kit Gonzales, chair of Newsletter of the Year 2002 Committee, 916-322-1082 or 916-689-2528, smgb@consrv.ca.gov.

Program of the Year 2002 Award

By Michael Corral, Program Committee Chair

I am excited to announce the start of the 2002 Program of the Year competition! Our association has an incredible reputation of providing the best in education and this competition exemplifies our efforts.

I do not have to tell you what a huge feather in a chapter's cap it is to win Program of the Year. Remember that your chapter will win cash if selected. First place winner gets \$300, second place gets \$200, and third place gets \$100. More importantly, if your chapter wins the award you get bragging rights for a whole year, which is the coup de gras of prizes! It is an extraordinary distinction to be recognized by your peers as the chapter with the winning program.

As the Program Committee chair, I am looking forward to receiving entries from every chapter. Please make this a difficult task for the committee and me. All chapter presidents have the necessary information regarding the competition. Just remember all entries must be submitted by January 31, 2003.

I am sure that all of the chapters will work diligently to make this year's award the most prestigious in SGMP history! I wish all the chapters the best of luck. I will see you in May at the awards show. Break a leg!

Editors Note

Carl C. Thompson, Executive Director

One year has passed, and I don't want to use the word anniversary, but instead remembrance of the tragic occurrence of September 11, 2001. To me, the word anniversary brings thoughts of celebration, and that is far from the truth in this case. We all need to remember our fellow Americans who lost their lives during the cowardly acts of terrorists; to pay homage to the brave fire fighters and policemen who untiringly stuck with the desperate search for survivors; and to thank God that you are an American, living in a country that is free.

In one year, SGMP has had, as all professional associations do, some changes and growing pains. The national president of SGMP, Ms. Cheryl Thompson, CMP, retired from the federal government, and stepped down from her position on the Board. Ms. Donna Carey, who, during her term on the National Board as first vice president, stepped up to the plate and accepted the open position as national president. These changes all took place during the 20th Annual Conference of SGMP, which was held in Norfolk, Virginia. Ms. Ruth Harris, CMP, was moved from the National Board position of director to the vacant position of first vice president, and Ms. Linda Rogers was appointed by the Board to fill the position of national director. It may be a little hard to follow, but it all fits beautifully. All of the people are highly qualified, and have made commitments to work in the best interest of all SGMP members.

As we enter into the fall and winter months, let us keep in mind how lucky we are to be Americans and how much we all love SGMP. Commitment, respect, professionalism, and volunteerism are what make SGMP the success story we all love to share when someone asks, "What is SGMP?"

How Can I be Part of Advantage Magazine?

Government Meetings Advantage Magazine is a reflection of its members. Share your knowledge and experience with the membership. We welcome all applicable articles and ideas for our industry. The following are three opportunities you might want to consider.

Travel Column. Where have your travels led you? What interesting places have you visited? SGMP would like to highlight destinations that you have been to, whether for business or for pleasure; we want your story for our travel column. If you are planning a trip, don't forget to take notes and bring along your camera. Photographs are appreciated.

Hindsight Column. Thank you for your hindsight stories! Now take another moment to think of the most embarrassing situation, how you handled it, and what you might have done differently. Write it down, and send it. These short vignettes are entertaining and practical.

The goal of the column is to provide an avenue for members to learn from each other. Send more! Names will be withheld upon request.

Original Article. Whether you are a planner or supplier, we value your training, expertise, and experience. Send in how-to, informative, and persuasive articles that you think would benefit the membership. Guidelines can be obtained via e-mail upon request.

Government Meetings Advantage Magazine is only as good as the contributing authors. If you have an article, story idea, or suggestion, please do not hesitate to contact Lynnette Simpson at 202-625-0723 or LynnetteLy@aol.com.

Please take note of the following deadlines for upcoming issues of *Advantage*: Spring Issue, January 15, 2003; Summer Issue, April 15, 2003; and Fall Issue, July 15, 2003.

I Would like that in Braille, Please!

By Davey Hulse, CEO, Braille Plus, Inc.

She is standing there. She has her hand out. With a smile on her face, she just said, "I'd like that in braille please." You look behind her at the dozen or so bystanders. They are all looking at the pretty woman with the beautiful, well-behaved guide dog. You gulp. You grab for the registration form. Ah! Whew! No where does it note that she requested the materials in braille or any other alternate format. Your stomach sinks because nowhere does the registration form offer, either.

You awaken in a cold sweat; the nightmare is over. You make a mental note to check the registration form for alternate format needs and to find resources to help.

The Americans with Disabilities Act

As a blind man, I have watched this exact scenario and I have also been the one holding out my hand. A mere 30 years ago, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that *reasonable accommodation* is the law of the land. In 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law. The *Technical Assistance* manual was written, stating that agencies needed to provide reasonable accommodations upon request. Self-assessment and transition plans are carried out for every agency. *Effective communications* became a hot topic of conversation.

Whether or not the law of the land mandated the provision of alternate formats, i.e., effective communications, meeting planners are in the hospitality industry. Nothing is more fun than to say, "I have that right here," or, "Sandy, will you get this lady one of our braille copies." Meeting planners and others in the hospitality industry are people pleasers. Standing at the side of a concourse, watching happy people with armloads of gift packs, programs, and listening to them talk appreciatively about one of the little touches you included just because...that is the really fun part of your business.

Let us make that happen for alternate formats. How do you go about providing these formats, and in this case, braille, in an efficient manner?

The Nuts and Bolts

First, give yourself time by being tough on your presenters. It is not just your problem. "I'm planning to write that on the plane as I come out there." And, "You've got Kinko's, don't you?"

You smile gently over the phone and kindly reply, "You've heard of the ADA, haven't you?" Explain that you need to have the information in alternate formats for the conference and this takes time. Kinko's doesn't do it. Request from speakers their basic script and outline two weeks in advance. If edits are made to it later, the speaker must announce that to everyone and have attendees make notes. Unfortunately, if presenters don't have the material to you by then, the material will not be handed out to anyone.

Be ready to stand by those guns. How discourteous, not to mention possibly illegal, it is to not have the handouts for people – all of the people – to reference?

Second, give yourself a fighting chance to meet the needs. Don't hide the "If you want your materials in alternate..." statement on the back. It should be up front, in 18 point, with enough space to describe what they need. Also provide a space for ambulance/wheelchair access and other needs.

Settle on a provider in advance, well in advance. By six weeks out you are going to know about how many documents and how many pages in each. "Around 100 pages in 4 documents" is close enough for that all-important discussion with your alternate format provider. Once the format of the information – PageMaker, PDF, Word – has been established, costing for mastering the first copy in each format can be given.

Where do you find those magical people? The Web and networking, for example the following Web sites: www.aph.org; www.afb.org; www.duxsys.com. They might not have the whole package (Braille, large print, audio, and electronic). Make sure you start researching vendors for alternate formats two or three months out. Get a price agreement set so you do not waste precious time while you are

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rearranging the caterers because the one you selected just went out of business.

Can you do some of it on your own? Do you have an expert in your organization who knows sound engineering, braille translation, braille proofing, large print layout, and specialized desktop publisher? If not, then do yourself and the user the favor of providing a professional rendition in the desired format.

Finally, give yourself some fudge factor. If you know there are going to be 12 people wanting large print at your 1,000-person convention, allow for 14. If a 15th person shows up, have arrangements with your provider to get quick additional copies overnighted to your convention.

Editor's Note: Look for Mr. Hulse's upcoming article in the Winter Issue of Advantage magazine on providing the alternate formats for a meeting.

Second Vice President Roundtable Update

By Sal A. Bonnello, CMP

My fellow SGMP Members, I would like to take a moment of your valuable time to share the exciting highlights and outstanding accomplishments that took place during the 2nd Vice Presidents Roundtable (VPR) meeting. We met September 13-14, 2002, at the lovely Rosen Hotel, home of the SGMP Annual Conference May 2003, in Orlando, Florida. For our members who are not familiar with the 2nd VPR, let me take a moment to offer additional insight.

The 2nd VPR meetings are held three times a year in conjunction with the chapter presidents, the National Board, and the Education Foundation. The first meeting is typically held during the month of September following the National Conference in the location of the following year's National Conference location. Chapter presidents, the second vice presidents, and the National Board determine and agree on the location of the second meeting. If you are interested in hosting this meeting, please express your interest to your chapter president. The third meeting is held in conjunction with the National Conference at a mutually beneficial time determined by the second vice presidents.

The 2nd VPR was established as the supplier voice that would work in conjunction with chapter presidents, the Education Foundation, and the National Board. The focus is to ensure supplier issues, opportunities, challenges, and concerns are kept in the forefront of the leadership from the local chapter level to the national level. Additionally, we want to

make sure that continually evolving industry trends, changes, and practices are reflected in the direction the society. We also want to make sure that the supplier needs are addressed in order to maintain the solvency of the society.

The following topics were addressed and discussed at the meeting:

- funding to continue and support the 2nd VPR meetings.
- extending the length of the tradeshow from three hours to four hours.
- having the tradeshow organized by geographic locations by state or region etc.
- requesting reimbursement for the CMP certification exam upon successful achievement.

The following items we will be discussed at our January 17 – 18 meeting.

- explore having some sort of SGMP identifier on supplier collateral/proposal denoting that the supplier is an SGMP member. See if the planners would be able to do so when sending out a RFP.
- discuss the possibilities of posting supplier hot dates/hot deals on the national Web site.
- investigate providing links of suppliers' Web sites from the national Web site.
- examine supplier member interest in adding a 2-day pre-conference CHSP workshop before the National Conference via a survey.

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As you can see we have many items we have worked on and will continue to work on to make SGMP more inclusive and better than ever! We encourage and welcome input from all of our members, as there are many brilliant ideas that each member has to share.

If you have an idea you would like discussed at the next meeting, I encourage you to put it in writing and present it to your respective chapter's second vice president. Your submission will added to the agenda for the next meeting. We truly hope to hear from you. See you in Orlando!

CHAPTER MONTHLY MEETINGS CALENDAR

Atlanta Chapter

- Oct. 17-20: Educational Retreat, Perdido Beach Resort
- Nov. 13: Holiday Inn Perimeter

Buckeye Chapter

- Nov. 16: Presentation by Mills/James Production
- Nov. 18: Ohio Celebration, Holiday Inn East

Crossroads of America Chapter

- Oct. 8: Board Meeting, Sheraton Indianapolis
- Oct. 27: Meeting Nightmares, Sheraton
- Nov. 12: Board Meeting, Omni Severin
- Nov. 19: AudioVisual, Omni Severin

Florida Capital Chapter

- Oct. 15: Silent Auction, Governor's Club
- Nov. 19: Tallahassee CVB

Greater Oregon SGMP Chapter

- Oct. 8: Ethics, Spirit Mountain Lodge
- Nov. 12: The Key to SGMP, Monarch Hotel

Great Lakes State Chapter

- Oct. 16: Achieving Personal Safety, Holiday Inn
- Nov. 20: Chapter Meeting

Heart of America Chapter

- Oct. 23: Bosses' Day Luncheon/Awards, Marriott
- Nov. 13: Federal Procurement Regs, Adam's Mark

Minnesota Northern Lights

- Oct. 17: Hilton Minneapolis
- Nov. 21: Breakfast, Northland Inn

Missouri State Capital Chapter

- Oct. 10: Behind the Scenes, Best Western
- Nov. 14: Disaster Becomes You, Best Western

NATCAP Chapter

- Oct. 16: Panel Discussion FPLP, Holiday Inn
- Nov. 20: CMP2, Hotel Washington

Old Dominion Chapter

- Oct. 2: Evaluating Your Business, Marriott
- Nov. 6: Alternative Meeting Sites, Holiday Inn

Rocky Mountain Chapter

- Oct. 11-13: Fall Education Convergence, Holiday Inn
- Nov. 26: CMP Information, Sheraton Denver

St. Louis Gateway Chapter

- Oct. 23: What is Business Casual?, Doubletree

San Francisco Bay Area Chapter

- Oct. 17: Government Issues, Holiday Inn/Ramada Inn
- Nov. 21: Green - Energy Conservation, Philip Burton Federal Building

Texas Lone Star Capital Chapter

- Oct. 10: Registration and the Internet, Holiday Inn
- Nov. 14: There is More to Green than Kermit, Marriott at the Capitol

Wild West Chapter

- Oct. 10: Together We're Better, Renaissance Hotel
- Nov. 14: Risk Management, Waterford Hotel

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