

September/2009



## MPI Heartland Chapter Newsletter

***Our goal is to provide educational opportunities for professional growth, development and competency for those in the meetings industry through education, communication, recognition and networking.***

### President's Corner

Sean Olson - President

Welcome to MPI 2009-2010. I am so excited to be leading this organization this year. I know that I have large shoes to fill from last year. Paulette Lester did an amazing job with our club and deserves a lot of credit for all the great things that happened in 2008-2009.



I want to thank all of the Chapter Leaders who have made a commitment to be on the Board of Directors or to serve as POD Leadership. We have a great team assembled and I am humbled to be working with all of them. We met in late July for our retreat and I can't wait to see the outcome of our work. The approved minutes from all board meetings and conference calls will be posted on GroupSpace so if you are interested in looking at those, you can find them in the documents section.

We are off to a great start with a fabulous August Chapter Meeting with Noah Blumenthal. We had one of our largest crowds ever to a Chapter Meeting and I hope that we will continue to build on this excitement.

I can tell you that the Fall Summit is going to be another amazing experience and we hope to build on the excitement from last year with the leadership of Amanda LaPuzza, CMP. Please plan to attend on October 7th at the Iowa Events Center and bring a friend! We are striving to beat our attendance numbers from last years' success.

As a member of the Heartland Chapter I am going to challenge all of you to a few things this year:

- \*Strive to attend more meetings than you did the previous year
- \*Bring at least two guests to either a Chapter or POD Meeting this year and ask them to be members

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**October 7**

**Fall Summit  
Iowa Events Center  
Des Moines, IA**

**November POD Dates**

**Western POD  
Georgetown Club  
Omaha, NE  
11/11/2009  
3:00-4:30**

**"Be the Type of Employee Your Employer Would Fight to Keep."**

**Central POD  
Courtyard by Marriott  
Ankeny, IA  
11/18/2009  
11:30-1:30pm  
"Negotiation Skills"**

**December Chapter Meeting  
Details Coming Soon!**

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**All of the approved board minutes are available to you on GROUPSPACE. Feel free to read**

\*Become a volunteer

\*Join GroupSpace or LinkedIn and learn how to use it - I know the Fall Summit will touch on LinkedIn, so I hope that you all will get involved. If you are on it, use it!

During these tough economic times, we need the help of all of our members to make this organization successful. Please do your part by attending and volunteering your abilities. We plan to take this Chapter to the next level but we can't do it without YOU!

I look forward to another great year and if you ever need anything, please contact me to discuss.

Sean Olson, CMP  
Heartland Chapter President

## Membership Corner

Jeff Spence -VP Membership

Welcome to the 2009-2010 MPI Year!

I am glad to report that even with the difficult economic conditions we are still at 133 members. Many thanks to everyone in the chapter who has continued to put the word out about the organization and help to keep us a healthy chapter in a very tough year.

As we continue to strive to grow the chapter this year- please keep in mind our "Recruitment Incentive" of \$50.00 for each new member that joins our chapter and mentions a current members name on their registration form. This incentive will continue running throughout our fiscal year.

The Membership Committee has some openings for volunteers, so please contact me at anytime for a listing of available opportunities.

Many thanks to Tami Reier, Patricia Fortune, Katie Schwint, Maggie Kotlarz, Kate Langmoreland and Nancy Maiers for their assistance last year and continued support for the current year.

Cheers,

Jeff

## Financial Times

Joan Hustad - VP Finance

**Sign up to be a host facility or a sponsor for a MPI Heartland Chapter meeting for the 2009 - 2010 year.**

**\$100 will allow you to be the sponsor of a POD Meeting:**



them at your own convenience.

Nominations are being accepted for "Star of the Quarter" If you'd like to nominate someone who's going above and beyond. Please contact Amanda LaPuzza 402-661-7010 or [amanda.lapuzza@starwoodhotels.com](mailto:amanda.lapuzza@starwoodhotels.com)

## Board Members 2009-2010

President  
Sean Olson  
402-599-6933

[solson@qwestcenter.com](mailto:solson@qwestcenter.com)

Vice President  
Amanda LaPuzza  
402-661-7010  
[Amanda.lapuzza@starwoodhotels.com](mailto:Amanda.lapuzza@starwoodhotels.com)

Vice President Membership  
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Vice President Finance  
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Vice President Communication  
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Vice President Administration  
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[AKistaitis@midamericacenter.com](mailto:AKistaitis@midamericacenter.com)

Chapter Business Manager  
Brenda Ram  
402-559-9250  
[bram@unmc.edu](mailto:bram@unmc.edu)

Past President  
Paulette Lester

515-699-3443  
plester@desmoinescvb.com

- You provide a meeting room and A/V (based upon the speakers' requests)
- You provide breakfast, lunch, break or reception at \$15 inclusive per person
- You donate a door prize for a raffle

**A POD sponsor will:**

- Receive two complimentary meeting registrations for sponsoring the meeting (\$40-\$60 value)
- Showcase your property to attendees of the POD meeting through the meeting set up and F&B
- Provide a 5 minute infomercial regarding your property during the business portion of the meeting
- Have the opportunity to offer a tour of your property to all interested attendees

**\$200 will allow you to be the sponsor of a Chapter Meeting:**

- Your donation of \$200 to the MPI Heartland chapter will help offset speaker and any out-of-pocket costs for a meeting.
- You donate a door prize for a raffle
- You receive two complimentary meeting registrations for sponsoring the meeting (\$80-\$100 value)

**A Chapter Meeting sponsor will:**

- Have the exclusive opportunity for a tabletop display near the registration table to display materials about your property to the attendees
- Provide a 5 minute infomercial regarding your property during the business portion of the meeting
- Place a complimentary ad in the next MPI Heartland Chapter newsletter

If you are interested in either opportunity, please contact Joan Husted, HRM, CMP via email or send a hard copy to:

Joan A. Husted, HRM, CMP, Program Associate  
Center for Continuing Education  
University of Nebraska Medical Center  
986800 Nebraska Medical Center  
Omaha, NE 68198-6800  
Telephone: 402-559-6235; Fax: 402-559-5915  
E-Mail: [jhusted@unmc.edu](mailto:jhusted@unmc.edu)

## Education Update

Gina Swackhammer - VP of Education

### **FALL SUMMIT ALMOST HERE! HAVE YOU REGISTERED YET?**

We are calling all meeting professionals, suppliers, and hoteliers in the Heartland to be a part of our second annual Fall Summit hosted by the MPI Heartland Chapter. Whether you are a member of MPI or considering joining, you will definitely benefit from this full day of education and networking.

The \$50 registration fee includes .3 CEUS for the educational sessions, lunch and bus transportation for those coming from the

Omaha/Lincoln/Council Bluffs area as well as parking at the Iowa Events Center for those driving.  
Agenda

7:00 AM Omaha/Lincoln/Council Bluffs Attendees Board Bus  
7:30 AM Bus stops in designated location in Council Bluffs  
9:30 AM Registration and Refreshments  
10:00 AM Bus Arrives at Iowa Events Center  
10:15 AM Welcome  
10:30 AM *Social Media For Meeting Professionals - Best Practices Today*, Patrick O'Malley  
12:00 PM Lunch  
12:45 PM - MPI Membership Benefits  
1:15 PM *What You Need to Know about Novel Influenza A (H1N1)* Jami S. Haberl, MPH, MHA Executive Director, Safeguard Iowa Partnership  
2:15 PM Refreshment Break  
2:30 PM *The Keys to Making a Lasting Difference in Work and Life* David Horsager, MA, CSP  
3:30 PM Adjourn/Bus Departs

**THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SPONSORS:**

Council Bluffs Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Embassy Suites Downtown Des Moines on the River  
Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Iowa Bankers Association  
Leading StaR Event Productions  
Midwest Speakers Bureau  
MPI Foundation  
Qwest Center Omaha  
Starwood Hotels and Resorts Global Sales

VISIT <http://www.mpiheartland.org/events.htm> for more information.

## Featured Article by: Pam Woods

10 Easy Steps to DeStress

Do you feel tense and anxious at work? Do your co-workers and/or boss make you crazy? Is your personal life less than blissful? If so, you've got stress.



If you're like most people, you've sought refuge from this situation by trying a quick fix or two like calling a friend, walking the dog, or going away for the weekend in an attempt to escape it all. But you know the truth-these strategies only serve as temporary diversions as nothing consequential in your life has changed. And, when you get back to your routine, you're likely to be confronted by and react to the same ole' stressors again.

Stress is America's #1 health problem, according to the American Institute of Stress. And, Vern S. Cherewatenko, M.D. and Paul Perry, authors of *The Stress Cure*, report it is more prevalent in women than men. Why? Women are more concerned with the everyday demands associated with their employment, spouse, children, money, and surroundings.

Stress is internal, which explains why you might react differently to an event than your neighbor. You may experience stress as tightness in your shoulders while someone else may feel a queasy stomach. In any case, it's universal that it can wreak havoc on your health when allowed to continue.

So, what can you do-the easiest way to mitigate its effect is to take charge of the one and only thing you have the power to control...YOU. Then, be conscious of what you can't control and let it go for good. By doing so, you'll be more durable when the going gets tough and by taking charge of your life, external things will change in response to your internal changes.

### **Here are 10 steps to destress for your present and future:**

#### **1. Heal yourself.**

Experts from the disciplines of psychology to medicine agree that practicing self-care is the key to eliminating stress. The most effective steps you can take are the simplest: exercise, a healthy diet, regular sleep, minimal alcohol intake, and nix smoking. Make these wholesome activities a lifestyle choice-you deserve it! Another benefit, your children will also learn self-care as you are modeling the behavior.

#### **2. Get organized.**

Physical clutter reminds us of things that need to be done and that's stressful. Remove your physical clutter and you'll eradicate your mental clutter, plus you'll feel energized. The recipe for eliminating clutter is the same regardless of the room or space you're working on. In short, begin by defining the purpose of your room, then identify the major categories to be kept in your space, sort all your belongings into those categories, edit each category, and finally, put your possessions in a pleasing and practical place. For detailed examples of the organizing process visit my Free how to articles.

#### **3. Set boundaries.**

Boundaries act as a filter to keep you safe from the hurtful behavior of others while allowing in the love, support and nurturing actions we all need. Set your boundaries by: (a) determining what others cannot do to you or in your presence and (b) sharing this information respectfully with anyone who is stepping over one of your boundaries.

#### **4. Take time for yourself.**

Put together a list of all the things you love to do but haven't regularly made time to do. Put your list in priority order and enter the top five items into your planner. Your list may include things as simple as journaling, reading a great book, taking a bubble bath, yoga, etc. You'll be more successful getting to these activities when you give them a time and place on your planner.

#### **5. Be positive.**

William James, the father of modern psychology said, "The greatest discovery of my generation is that man can alter his life simply by altering his attitude of mind." In other words, what you say and what you tell yourself impact the present and create your future. Love yourself and use the power of positive words, pleasing thoughts and affirming beliefs to live the life you want to live.

#### **6. Work in a career you love.**

If you're like most people, you spend the majority of your waking hours at work. You'll know you're in the right profession when: you wake up anxious to go to work, you want to do your best daily, and you know your work is important.

#### **7. Surround yourself with a supportive community.**

You are who you spend time with. Hang out with people who love and accept you just the way you are, are interested in you (not what you can do for them), lift you up (not wear you down), solve problems quickly, don't gossip or complain, and know how to have fun. Anything is possible with the right support.

#### **8. Learn to say, "No."**

We've all been influenced by people in our life who tell us we should do

this or we ought to do that. As a result, we may end up living a life that others have decided for us versus living the life we want. So, the next time you think of something you ought to do or someone else suggests you should do, take a breath and ask yourself if it's something you want to do. If not, just say, "no thank you." When you say no to things you don't care to do, you are saying yes to you and this will free up your time and energy for the things you choose to do. Bottom line - you'll be happier.

### **9 Zap tolerations.**

A toleration is something that irritates you and drains your energy because it needs to be done, fixed, removed, or changed. If you're like most people you may be tolerating 100 or more things! Put together a list of all the things that bug you, e.g. a dripping faucet, money concerns, your weight, shopping and running errands, not enough time, computer files out of control, your hair, a room that needs to be painted, etc. When your list is complete, group like items and see if one solution will eliminate multiple tolerations. For example, if you have piles of clothing in each bedroom, dirty windows and dust bunnies on your floor, hiring a housekeeper will zap all three tolerations. Line up a housekeeper, today. Then, commit to spending a chunk of time each week to zap your other tolerations. If you have a toleration that you don't have the skill or know-how to fix, consider calling an expert or seek out a skilled professional to trade services with.

### **10. Get your needs met.**

A "need" is not an option, it is something you must have to function fully. It is differentiated from a "want" in that a want is optional. Unmet needs can drive you to distraction and worse. Determine what needs you have that aren't being met, if any, and then take the appropriate action to get them fulfilled. Example: If you've taken a big hit and are going through a career transition, ask a good friend to call you two or three times a week to check in with you and give you support. Other options include joining a group of people in a like situation or hiring a coach who specializes in career transitions. When you acknowledge and satisfy your needs, you will be free to focus on other areas of your life.

If you want to be happier and more successful, minimize your stress by focusing on the things you have the power to control.

Free how-to articles and advice - [www.worklifecoach.com/solutions.htm](http://www.worklifecoach.com/solutions.htm)

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[www.worklifecoach.com/services.htm](http://www.worklifecoach.com/services.htm)

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## **Planner Spotlight!**

Written by Michelle DeClerck, CMP, President, Conference Event Management

Cherie Keithley has earned the right to be called an irrigation expert, spending the past 31 years at Valmont Irrigation, Inc., first in accounting, followed by the past 14 years as the Marketing Specialist/Meeting Planner in the Irrigation Division. Typically, meeting planners are not always fond of accounting processes, but this skill has allowed her to stay within the meeting budget which is a sought-after attribute in this economy!

When Cherie's not planning their large sales meeting biannually, she's busy with a dozen different tradeshow they participate in, along with planning several smaller irrigation meetings throughout the year. It's no

wonder when asked to cite her most enjoyable part of meeting planning, it was difficult to pinpoint just one. "Let me start with meeting and working with all the people at the hotels. I have made some life-long friends."

Cherie realizes it's the ability to take the challenge of planning a meeting for hundreds of people over a year's time, which includes all the usual aspects of meeting planning from start to finish, as well as "making sure everyone is happy at the actual event - which, you must know before you start in this business, is literally impossible! And then after some exhausting days of recovery, starting the whole process over again" stated Cherie.

Her favorite meetings to plan have been the company's 50th Anniversary Global Sales Meeting in Puerto Rico. "Visiting the rain forest and the ziplines, to touring the amazing historical streets of Old San Juan - this is definitely a place you want to go back to." In addition, she cites San Francisco as at the top of her list as well with "so many things to see and do." If you're considering this destination, give Cherie a call as she's been there five times over the past six years.

Cherie is a graduate of Wayne State College in Wayne, Nebraska. When she's not challenged with a meeting planning situation, she keeps busy attending her daughter's volleyball games at Elkhorn High School, along with entertaining her 6-year old granddaughter.

When it comes to advice, Cherie offers this great perspective for all of us in this industry. " ... I became a very detailed person which has been a big positive for me in the field of meeting planning, but I have also learned to not let the little things get to you and always keep a smile on your face. Even if something does go wrong during the course of the meeting, more than likely, you and your coworker are probably the only ones that will even realize it, so keep the smile and don't let the pressure get to you - everything will somehow fall into place and it will be a success!

## Supplier Spotlight!

Written by Michelle DeClerck, CMP, President, Conference Event Management



Debbie Gunderson not only exhibits a positive energy, but also the WIT (Whatever it Takes) attitude to get the job done that's apparent when you look at her history of being in the hospitality industry for over 30 years. Debbie serves as the Corporate Sales Manager for the Renaissance Savery Hotel in downtown Des Moines, handling the corporate and medical markets for five years.

Her favorite events were booking many Ski Club groups while she was with the Sagebrush Inn & Conference Center in Taos, New Mexico, as it was in her job description to ski with the decision makers and show them the mountain. Debbie realized "it was a tough job, but someone

had to do it!"

Over the years she's seen so many changing aspects, and has always been in the trenches with her clients to provide the best service possible. "I started by delivering airline tickets to corporate clients for a travel agency in Houston, and then began working for a tour company that took groups to Mexico and Canada. I could write a book with many, many stories as the hospitality industry is never boring," stated Debbie.

"I love working with people and the opportunity to meet all of their meeting needs. I enjoy my relationships with (most) meeting planners and have made some lifetime friends in the process," commented Debbie.

She's a graduate of the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. During her free time you're likely to find her outside downhill skiing, kayaking, biking and hiking. When the weather turns, she can be found working out at Jazzercise.

## MONEY TALKS!

### Scholarship Update

The Heartland Chapter Board of Directors has increased the scholarship pool from \$1,500 to \$2,000 for the 2009-2010 year.



Other changes included the submission of scholarship requests to twice a year (6 weeks prior to the Fall Summit which is scheduled for October 7, 2009) and (6 weeks prior to the annual meeting which is scheduled for April 12-13, 2010).

Please download the new guidelines and application either from [mpiheartland.org](http://mpiheartland.org) or from [mpiweb.org](http://mpiweb.org) and the chapter groupspace document listing.

### Newsletter Advertising

Have you considered how you can best get your business name out there to potential clients? Consider advertising in the MPI Heartland Chapter newsletter! The newsletter is sent electronically to Heartland Chapter members and uploaded to the website.

The Heartland Chapter publishes a newsletter five times a year which includes information on upcoming chapter events, updates on the industry, member information, MPI International events, education AND advertising!

The deadline to submit advertising requests is the 15th of the month for the following month. Ads should be submitted electronically in .jpg format.

For more information, contact Nichole Brown at [NBrown@visitomaha.com](mailto:NBrown@visitomaha.com) or at 402-444-4611

### Earn CEUs By Attending MPI Heartland Chapter Meetings

If you recently received your CMP designation or are considering applying for it, did you know that you can earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs) by attending your Heartland Chapter meetings? CEU's convert into validated hours that serve as points toward your CMP and CMM. This information is requested when completing the CMP

and CMM applications and for recertification.

Members may keep their own detailed record of MPI meetings they attend and CEU points they earn throughout the year. However, if you prefer, I will keep track of this information for you according to the guidelines set by MPI. POD leaders and the VP of Education have received a copy of the CEU Chapter Guidelines and Criteria set by MPI, and if the meeting program you attend qualifies for CEUs, please complete the CEU Tracking Form (available at your meetings), have your POD leader or Education/Program Chairperson sign off on your attendance and fax the form to me at (515) 280-4140. Please note, however, that forms submitted after 30 days of the completion of the program will not be accepted for credit. At the end of the MPI fiscal year, you will receive a report showing the number of CEU credits you have earned.

Visit the MPI website [www.mpiheartland.org](http://www.mpiheartland.org) for the pdf file to review the requirements for the CMP designation. Feel free to contact me at 515.286.4220 or you can email me at [PamPeterson@iowabankers.com](mailto:PamPeterson@iowabankers.com) if you have any questions.

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