

# the chatter



January/February 2020 | MMXX No.1

## #UNMISSABLE

This year's PCMA Convening Leaders theme was "REACH"! As in previous years, attendees were challenged to spend three days creating and finding new ideas, re-energizing long time relationships and make new connections that would impact our organizations, our careers, and our industry.

The PCMA Capital Chapter also took on a theme this year of "UNMISSABLE!" The definition for UNMISSABLE is "so good it should not be missed." Convening Leaders was the kick-off for many of our capital chapter members, as their first "UNMISSABLE" event of the year. There were many sessions and events that occurred during the conference that were "UNMISSABLE". Debra Jasper, session speaker for "Want Engagement? You have 8 seconds – GO!" stated that you only have eight seconds to get your audience's attention. Debra shared tips regarding writing emails and documents that get noticed.

"People are not reading long emails as they don't have time and lose interest." With this great learning, I am summarizing "UNMISSABLE" sessions and quotes from the conference in hopes you will read everything:

- PCMA Capital Chapter kicked off its first event of the year, on January 5, 2020 at the Hilton Union Square with over 600 attendees.
- The Detroit Academy of Arts and Science Choir gave an amazing opening on the main stage on January 6th followed by bestselling author Simon Sinek. He presented five important practices required in every business environment. "Prepare for existential flexibility. Be ready and able to make profound strategic shifts to better advance your cause," is one practice that stood out for me.
- Tuesday, January 7th started with the 20 in their 20's celebration. There were two Keynote sessions that followed. Bozoma Saint John who shared the big trend right now is transparency within an organization, and

NASA Legend Gene Kranz who shared the importance of accountability. Both speakers gave inspirational presentations.

- Condoleeza Rice gave the closing keynote session on Wednesday, January 8th and discussed her roles in the George W. Bush administration. She shared the challenges she faced and what she has learned throughout her career. "Look for mentors who are people who believe in you and see things you don't see in yourself" was one of the many great tips she shared.

I am sure many of you have your own "UNMISSABLE" events and sessions from Convening Leaders. Please share them on our Chapter Facebook, TWITTER and INSTAGRAM page and don't forget #UNMISSABLE.

**Stacey Knoppel**  
Director, Convention Management | Events DC



### The PCMA Capital Chapter is where "You Belong"!

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accepting articles for our library to be used for future issues, if you would like to write something, send an email for article guidelines.

**message from the board****HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

As I write this article, I am just returning from the PCMA Convening Leaders conference in San Francisco where I was so proud to be part of such a vibrant, forward thinking community of professionals and inspired by the important work of our industry. If you were unable to join us this year be sure



to check out some of the great digital content that is available at <https://conveningleaders.org/>. It was wonderful to reconnect with so many of you at the Capital and Chesapeake Chapter Reception at Hilton Union Square and throughout the conference along with meeting so many new members.

**The theme of this year's Convening Leaders was REACH which reminded us to reach for:**

- Higher levels of professional success
- Deeper personal connections with friends and colleagues
- Wider audiences for your events and services
- Local communities through meaningful social impact projects

As our PCMA Capital Chapter enters a new decade I would encourage each of you to embrace the reach theme for our chapter by serving as an ambassador to invite new members and welcome them into our community. We have so much to offer from education, to members only content/resources, to peer to peer networking! Please help us communicate all the wonderful benefits our chapter offers to professionals within the business events community. Although the Capital Chapter of PCMA is the largest chapter with over 1,600 members and has an incredible average membership tenure, I'm always surprised how many planners, suppliers, students and faculty we still have in the greater DC area to invite along with us. We will kick 2020 off January 30th with our ever popular Mix 'n Bowl at Pinstripes in Georgetown - be sure to join us and bring along someone you know who may benefit from joining our chapter.

I would also be remiss if I did not say a huge thank you to all our committee leaders for their efforts on the 2020 budgeting process. Although this may not be a favorite component of the important work our volunteer leaders do for our chapter, it's an important one to ensure our chapter has the resources to further its mission. Thank you!

Here's to ushering in an innovative and engaging new decade for our chapter! And remember there's always an opportunity to be part of the PCMA Capital Chapter. If you'd like to volunteer, please reach out to us - we'd be delighted to have you join us!

**Kyla Knudson,**  
Treasurer





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# 2020 VISION

Making 2020 unmissable is our chapter leadership's goal as we kick off a new decade. As we bring our first issue of the new year to you, we want to highlight some coming attractions we will be featuring to help make The Chatter unmissable as well.

**Our chapter's strategic goals and vision are focused on the following 6 areas:**

- > **Diversity**
- > **Inclusion**
- > **Education**
- > **Innovation**
- > **Member Experience**
- > **Volunteer Experience**

Keep an eye out in our upcoming Chatter issues for updates on the chapter's future strategies in each area.

We've also challenged ourselves to become more



consistent with our industry jargon in our articles, starting with what we call ourselves!

Are you a planner or a business event strategist? CVB or DMO? 3rd Party or Intermediary Partner?

You get the idea! As we embark upon a new decade, we'll strive to elevate our industry vocabulary to better reflect what it is we all do.

We look forward to sharing your stories. May you all have perfect 20/20 vision this year!

**Kristen Parker**  
Director of Eastern Regional Sales, Visit Austin

**Rosa Mendoza-Friedheim**  
Director, Global Accounts, Omni Global Sales



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**ACG announcement**

PCMA Capital Chapter is pleased to announce that we have **a new, full service, management company.**

With the closure of Interels' DC office, the board requested RFP's from three AMC's for bid.

We are extremely confident that the group will be a successful partner for us.

Our very own Bea Tijerina has been hired by ACG as Managing Director and will continue to be our liaison for all of our chapter needs.

**Kristen Parker**  
Director of Eastern Regional Sales, Visit Austin

**Rosa Mendoza-Friedheim**  
Director, Global Accounts, Omni Global Sales



## PCMA CONVENING LEADERS FIRST TIMERS



"There's no such thing as best. There's only ahead and behind." Words from the Main Stage speaker Simon Sinek on opening day of the 2020 PCMA Convening Leaders that left me inspired and invigorated for my first time attending one of the most important conferences for Event Professionals. From here on out, I promised myself that I would take in every experience and interaction as an opportunity to learn, grow, and expand my reach with new ideas and move ahead.

My experience in San Francisco as a Scholarship recipient, to put it simply into three words, was motivating, educational, and reaffirming towards my passion for this industry. I had such an incredible time; from attending networking events that allowed me to connect with so many talented event professionals, to continuing my education of events in the highly informative sessions, as well as having some fun too along the way (especially while dancing along to Maroon 5!).

I saw this opportunity as a highly valuable investment of my time and helpful towards achieving higher levels of professional success, especially as I prepare to take my profession to the next level with a CMP certification. Thanks to the Capital Chapter, PCMA Foundation, and its scholarship program, I left San Francisco feeling as though I used every valuable second to soak up new ideas and most importantly reaffirmed my love for what I do.

**Jaime Klopfer**  
Program Associate, Meetings  
American Society of Clinical Oncology



Thank you, Capital Chapter, for the Convening Leader registration scholarship. It was a long journey to San Francisco but the connections I made and knowledge I gained made it worth the hassle! After sitting on the plane in DC for more than an hour and missing my connection in LA, I was finally in San Francisco. I had to figuratively and literally hit the ground running. Upon arrival, I had just enough time to make it to my hotel, freshen up and change clothes, and make it to the Opening Reception. For the Opening Reception, PCMA used two very large shipping pier buildings that had been converted into event space to give us a taste of the different neighborhoods in San Francisco and the surrounding area.

The education was sensational. My two favorite sessions were "Increasing Your Sales Leads" and "The Art of Persuasion". Jennifer Darling dropped knowledge, in her sales session, about what works, what doesn't work, and the importance of personalization. What I appreciated most about her session was that she didn't just speak to typical salespeople. Her content was relevant for third party event planners, like me. David Meade, in his persuasion session, managed to be enlightening and entertaining. All through his session he gave useful tips on what drives people, practical applications on how to use the knowledge to persuade them to make a choice, and big laughs.

From the Main Stage, the keynotes were 20 mins of high-density knowledge. The two that made the most impact on me were "The Infinite Game" with Simon Sinek and "Inspire Social Change Through Brand Storytelling" with Bozoma Saint John. Bozoma was AMAZING! I feel that if I use the knowledge she shared one day I will be hanging out with the likes of P Diddy and MJB like she does. Oh Yes! I now follow her on IG and Twitter. I couldn't see Secretary Rice because I had to make my journey back east. Luckily for me, my return was less eventful than my trip to the west. Thanks again Capital Chapter for making the experience possible.

**Tony Scurry, MBA, CMP**  
President and CEO | 7 Pointe Planning, Inc.



2020..what a year so far..what can I say..where do I start? That's right, I'm going to start right with the 2020 PCMA Convening Leaders Conference. As a "First Timer" at Convening Leaders, I wasn't prepared at ALL! Prior to leaving for the conference, I meticulously planned my schedule (down to the minute); confirmed lunch and dinner meetings and mapped out my siteseeing plans. Within 20 minutes of arriving in San Francisco, that schedule went right out the door.

What I failed to account for was that a milestone birthday (40th) for me would fall smack dab right over the conference dates and it seems like everyone in the industry knew too! The experience at this conference is one that I'll never forget. The Conference Theme was REACH! Between being inspired to REACH by Simon Sinek, Bozoma Saint John, and Condoleezza Rice; and attending a Maroon 5 concert, what better 40th Birthday Celebration could a girl dream of? The opportunity to be surrounded by like-minded Event Professionals, discussing new event concepts and questioning what it means to "Be and Live as Your Authentic Self" was eye-opening. What a PHENOMENAL experience! Thank you PCMA Capital Chapter for this wonderful opportunity!

**Chandra M. Champion, MSSA, CNM**  
Conference and Events Manager  
National WIC Association

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CAPITAL CHAPTER  
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**JACLYN ROSENBERG**  
The Humane Society of the United States



**LAUREN WASHBURN**  
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## What Was Supposed to Be and What's Next in the Life of **ERIC COMMODORE**

Last year's series of articles focused on what a member's career was "supposed" to be and this year's articles will focus on "what's next" in a member's career or personal goals. In this interview; however, Eric's career reads more like last year's subject and it's in his personal life that we find the "what's next". Eric sees his career story as an anecdote, and it really is an amusing story about a real-life incident. He entered the meeting and event planning industry by mistake because he wanted to go on vacation. Eric's degree from George Washington and then Columbia Universities is in Finance and Accounting and he worked in finance for a company. Eric had wanted to take a vacation and his boss wanted him to attend a financial conference with the Edison Electric Institute, so he encouraged Eric to go to the conference and take a vacation from there. One thing led to another and Eric was offered a position in planning meetings for the Institute. He was with the EEI for eight years and has now been at his current position with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association for 12 years. Eric stayed loyal to the field of electricity in all his endeavors. He is excited and happy about where he's at in his career because every day is different, it's never the same day twice. He can be frustrated some days in his career but never bored and he has no aspirations to change that.

On a personal level; however, Eric has another story to tell. Eric's father was in the military, so they traveled around a lot. He started singing in church when young and continued that passion with a group of guys singing male group reviews, R&B, gospel and old school stuff. He's worked with the Navy Jazz Band, has done session singing, background singing for professional gospel artist and for a Grammy nominated artist that used to be in the navy. He sung in DC, Biloxi and New Orleans and took four or five years off from singing. Eric is now "Back in the Band"! He says that singing helps on the other side of his world. It unleashes his creativity and it helps him with his ability to be "on" all the time.



I think many of us can identify with Eric's "Show Mode" and his "Me Mode" concept. Both in work and in leisure he says we often need to have a dual personality. Eric's military upbringing has made him more adaptable and his singing keeps him at ease so to speak. Eric is a man of leisure and he likes to make people feel comfortable. He uses humor and laughter to accomplish that goal.

Whether in a meeting or enjoying a performance, look for Eric to keep you laughing and happy!

**Marilyn Atchue-Zuill**  
Global Account Director, HPN Global



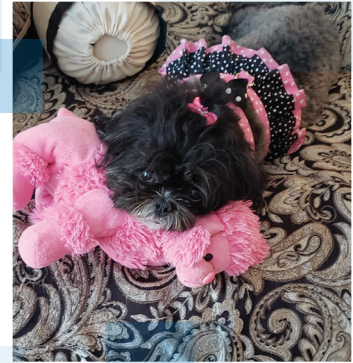
## 2020 special feature

### Chapter Members and Their Pets

My mother wanted a new puppy after losing our sweet family dog Bogey and went to a local friend in WV to see what they had for baby Shih Tzu's. We had such great luck with the four generations we had previously in our family. Mom chose one of the little girl puppies and called me with glee in her voice. I was so happy for her, then an hour later she calls to tell me that she reserved the other little girl for me since I needed to slow down and be home more often. I screamed "WHAT?!" I don't have the lifestyle for a dog let alone a puppy to train and raise. She insisted the puppy sisters couldn't be separated and that was that. Before I knew it my dear friend Beth Ellis was throwing me a "Puppy Shower" complete with Pupcakes to celebrate Brie's new life.

My mom knew what she was doing putting this amazing bundle of fur and love in my heart. AuBrie is the fur daughter I never had. She dresses better than I do sometimes with a wardrobe of parkas, fur harnesses, argyle raincoats, little black dresses, patriotic harnesses, holiday dresses, pom pom hats, Steeler and Redskin puppy dresses, hundreds of colored bows, Penguin Hockey hats, and best of all WVU outfits and scarves.

I cannot imagine life without my fur children – they are the love of my life, spoiled rotten and loved beyond belief AND



it goes both ways. Nothing is sweeter than coming home after a long day to a wiggly butt, wet doggie kisses and a loudly purring kitten (yes I also adopted a kitten!) They compete to see who can get the closest. It's like musical chairs when one leaves the other jumps over to where the other had been and vice versa. It's quite comical at times.

AuBrie is four and Pepper Jack is seven months -- I guarantee at this moment AuBrie is sleeping in PJ's kitty bed and PJ is sleeping or using one of Brie's as her bed or bathroom (I think she's stating her A Type personality). We are looking forward to them being best buddies before too long.

|| Susan D. Haning, CEM, CMP  
Business Development Director, Freeman

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# GovRel 2020: Focus Forward

As a new year approaches, it is human nature to reflect on the past year to enjoy the successes, assess the "fails", and relish in the excitement of the future. So, what does the future look like for the PCMA Capital Chapter Government Relations Committee? While there is no crystal ball to tell us all of what the next year will hold, your committee leaders are without question focused on quality experiences for all members, providing the best insight on policy, making a positive effect on our industry, and creating the best tools that allow our members to understand and navigate the changes and issues that lie ahead. **We are FOCUSED ON FORWARD.**

First! We look forward to welcoming our new committee volunteers as well as those who have decided to continue their service on the committee. We value your commitment and are inspired by your willingness to serve.

Open minds and open mouths. We do not want anyone to be silent about what and why of the committee. We are here to represent you to the best of our ability while advancing the profession. We urge you all to please communicate with us, because closed mouths don't get fed.

Registering voters for the 2020 election! We plan on hosting voter registration booths at all PCMA Capital Chapter events, and providing folks with information on the all sides of an issue.

We are ONE! It is our hope to be able to work with all committees to present a strong, united, and informed front when dealing with policy issues.

Advocacy for the benefit and advancement of our members, our industry, and our world. We want to provide tools to help each of you become a strong industry advocate. We want to take advantage of all avenues.

Real talk for real times! Regardless of where we are in our professional lives, the last decade has been full of changes – great, good, and bad. We need to be ready to confront the next decade with real talk (no fake news). We will be authentic in our dealings so that we can experience real beneficial growth as industry professionals.

Delivering a community of information to literate industry professionals is the ultimate goal. It's no longer enough to have information; we are a country on information overload – with access to 24-hour news channels, immediate

information via online searches, Wikipedia, Facebook, Instagram, daily, weekly and biweekly professional newsletters. We are exhausted with the amount of information available, but do you know what to do with the information you have? Are you information literate? We are going to make every attempt to ensure that the information we disseminate is accompanied by ways to use it to benefit you, the profession, and the communities we serve.

We look forward to an engaging, enlightening and enriching 2020, and we thank you in advance for your guidance and good deeds.

Cyndie Graddy, CMP, CVEP, HMCC, SEPC  
Director of Events, Capital Association Management

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## emerging professionals committee

November/December 2019

### CLASSROOM VISITS

In November and December, The Emerging Professionals Committee hosted its last three Classroom Visits for the Fall 2019 Semester. We put together a panel of industry professionals to educate students enrolled in Conference Management, Tourism and/or Hospitality. The panelists discussed their daily job responsibilities, shared insight into how their various roles intersect and support each other and included a discussion on current trends.



On **November 7, 2019**, volunteers spoke at The George Washington University with Professor Stuart Levy's Management and Tourism Studies - School of Business class.

**THE PANEL INCLUDED:**

- **Kay A. Russell**, National Account Executive, Meet Minneapolis
- **Penny Seward**, Sales Manager, Hyatt Regency Washington
- **Malene Ward**, Independent Planner/Founder - Phoenix Planning Group



On **November 19, 2019**, a panel presented at Salisbury University with Professor Paul Scovell's Conference Management, Department of Communication class.

**THE PANEL INCLUDED:**

- **Katelyn Diehl**, Convention Sales Manager, Destination DC
- **Tyra Dyson**, Manager of Conference Programming, Association for Professionals in Infection Control & Epidemiology (APIC)
- **Andrea Massengile**, Manager, Global Meetings, American Industrial Hygiene Association
- **Malene Ward (Moderator)**, Independent Planner/Founder - Phoenix Planning Group



On **December 3, 2019**, the presentation site was James Madison University to Professor Theresa Lind's Introduction to Event Management classes.

**THE PANEL INCLUDED:**

- **Katelyn Diehl (Moderator)**, Convention Sales Manager, Destination DC
- **Emily Parsons**, Meetings Coordinator, National Association of Attorneys General
- **Christine Faiman**, CMP, Global Account Executive, Marriott International
- **Christopher Young**, CAE, Chief Program Officer, DECA

This was our first time presenting at Salisbury University, while George Washington University and James Madison University are schools we visit every Semester. The students received information on best practices, insights regarding networking and advice on how to get connected and employed in the industry.

>>> **We want to thank our panelists for their time and knowledge sharing.**

If you are interested in volunteering to be part of one of our panels during the Spring Semester, or if you know of a school (high school or college) that would benefit from one of our **Classroom Visits**: please contact **Malene Ward** at [malene@phoenixplanninggroup.com](mailto:malene@phoenixplanninggroup.com).



## Security and Safety Corner

Do you have an emergency plan in place should something happen during your conference? Do you know what the emergency plan is for the facility, the hotel or the city your meeting is in? In today's world, safety and security have to be at the forefront of every meeting planner, service contractor and venue.

Tune in to next month's Chatter for tips that you can incorporate into your meeting.



Stacy Knoppel  
Events, DC



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