

the official newsletter of the pcma capital chapter

## 2014 President's Message



As the President-Elect this past year, many people have asked about my vision for the Capital Chapter. I responded that it's not about my vision- it is our members' vision, and ensuring that it aligns with the mission of our organization.

As you may know, in PCMA's bylaws, our mission reads: *The mission of the Professional Convention Management Association is to deliver*

*superior and innovative education and promote the value of professional convention management.*

Our Chapter mission is: *The Capital Chapter of the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) delivers breakthrough education, encourages involvement in community-based service programs, and promotes the value of professional convention and meeting management at the local level.*

I have assured PCMA National that one of our Chapter goals is to have our committees, the lifeblood of our Chapter, establish their own mission statements in alignment with National's "charges" for each committee. During our recent Chapter Leadership Retreat, each committee reviewed these "charges" and developed their mission and vision for the upcoming year. This information will soon be available on our website. As the committees are working on programming, sponsorship development or providing communications to the membership, I have encouraged them to develop actions

that are in alignment with their missions, ensuring that we are fulfilling the mission of our Chapter and our national organization.

In addition, National has established Advocacy Central, to help increase the awareness about the importance of face to face meetings. Being in the nation's capital we have an opportunity to fully support this effort. Through the use of our Government Relations Committee, we will be disseminating information on legislation that will affect our industry and suggest actions to be taken by our members.

Moreover, the Professional Development Committee is working to fulfill its obligation to provide breakthrough education. You will see topics that are trending in our industry and new types of programs that get to the core of what our membership wants. Our Sponsorship Committee is seeking new and unique venues for these programs as well as meeting the needs of our supplier sponsors. Community Services will focus on projects where more of our members can participate, and Communications will continue to disseminate timely and relevant information through various tools we have. Membership will recruit new talent to our roster and Marketing will ensure that everything we do promotes our brand.

The year 2014 promises to be an exciting time for our Chapter as the leadership fulfills your vision. I wish you all a successful year with much happiness and health. I'm here to make sure we meet your needs and deliver what we promise. Please reach out to me or other Board and Committee leaders and let your voice be heard. Here's to you! •

*by Annette Suriani, CMP, Director of Global Accounts, ConferenceDirect*



**January 12, 2014**  
**Capital Chapter & Chesapeake Chapter Reception**  
**PCMA Convening Leaders**  
**5:00-6:30pm**  
**Fairmont Copley Plaza**  
Registration will open mid-December

PCMA Boston | January 12-15, 2014

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

**Mission:** The Capital Chapter of the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) delivers breakthrough education, encourages involvement in community-based service programs, and promotes the value of professional convention and meeting management at the local level.

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 Gail Seawright, Loews Ventana Canyon

**Community Services**

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 Regina Rink, CASE, Greater Phoenix Convention & Visitors Bureau

**Emerging Professionals**

Mary Beth Baluta, Cincinnati USA Convention & Visitors Bureau  
 Mindy Halpert, Consortium for School Networking

**Marketing**

John Rubsam, Americans for the Arts  
 Jamie Rice, Greater Raleigh Convention & Visitors Bureau

**Membership**

DeVonne Parks, CEM  
 GERALYN KRIST, Kansas City Convention & Visitors Association

**Professional Development**

Stacey Knoppel, Director of Sales and Marketing, Baltimore Convention Center  
 Lisa French, Hilton Baltimore

**Sponsorship**

Mary Gallagher, CMP, Director, Citywide Accounts Eastern Region, San Francisco Travel  
 Leah Jones, CMP, Automotive Aftermarket Industry Association

**Special Projects**

Kim Struble, CMP, Director, Conferences & Meetings, National Association of Counties

**Chapter Liaison to PCMA National Board of Directors**

Greg O'Dell, Events DC

Capital Chapter: [pcmainfo@ascent-management.com](mailto:pcmainfo@ascent-management.com)

If you have any comments, suggestions or would like to write an article for The Chatter, email: [PCMAchatter@gmail.com](mailto:PCMAchatter@gmail.com).



## Message from the Board

Kirsten Olean, CMP, CAE

President



Wow, what a year we've had! As you read through this month's issue, you'll have a chance to review all of the amazing accomplishments of our robust, engaged committees. These committees, made up of dedicated, talented volunteers, have put together fantastic education and networking events, supported our emerging leaders,

secured wonderfully generous sponsors, reached out in service to the greater DC community, recruited and retained members, marketed all of our events and produced this wonderful newsletter. A huge round of applause to all of our volunteers for a job well done!

This year, we focused on our efforts and energy on making everything we did a "can't miss" opportunity, and we asked you to join the effort. And you did! Your participation in all of our events – from the first education program through the last Capital Classroom – was essential to our success as a chapter this year. You let us take some risks – for example, reinventing the annual meeting – and your support allowed us the freedom to try new approaches. So please, a round of applause for you, as well!

I feel so fortunate to have had the opportunity to serve as your president this past year. It was truly an honor to serve alongside all of our wonderful chapter volunteers, and I loved getting a chance to meet and engage with so many of you throughout the year. My commitment to the chapter will continue well beyond this year, and I hope that yours will, too. I look forward to seeing you at future events! •



### Connect with the Capital Chapter!



PCMA Capital Chapter hopes our ever increasing methods of communication and networking have benefited you in many ways. Let us know how we can improve these tools or add new tools as we continue to make this YOUR Chapter every day!



@PCMACC



Contact us via e-mail, Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn! We improve by hearing from each of you! Have a safe and happy holiday and may the New Year bring you huge success!

**Keep Planning, Keep Growing, Keep Connected!**

## Communications Committee

On behalf of 30+ committee members, thank you for reading *The Chatter*. We understand that your time is valuable. You simply can't read every newsletter that arrives to your desk, but our committed authors have taken the time to provide timely and relevant content to educate, inspire and innovate.

Each newsletter includes a letter from a Capital Chapter board member, committee updates, member spotlights, shout outs, a calendar and fascinating articles. Our articles highlight friends in the chapter, update readers on local happenings and provide helpful industry content. This year, we added a Government Affairs column to track legislation affecting our industry. And with the help of the Sponsorship Committee, we were able to extend two issues to 16-pages instead of the regular 12-pages. I want to extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to all of the authors, champions, guest authors, issue editors, ASCENT Management, LLC and production editors who volunteer their time and service. Their dedication made 2013 a success!

We hope that you have enjoyed this year's ten issues of our informative and entertaining newsletter and continue to read and share them with your colleagues. *The Chatter* thrives on exceeding our readers' expectations. We want to do everything possible to make *The Chatter* as useful and edifying as possible.

If you ever have any suggestions of what you would like to see covered in the newsletter, let us know. If you would like to be featured as a Planner/Supplier Spotlight, if you need to announce a job change or want to send kudos to someone, simply email: [PCMAChatter@gmail.com](mailto:PCMAChatter@gmail.com). We look forward to hearing from you and hope that you continue to be loyal readers!

Missed any issues? Check out back issues on the Capital Chapter webpage at <http://www.pcma.org/connect-and-grow/chapters/capital/about/newsletter> •

*Chair: Tanya Barrett, CMP, CEM, Manager, Meeting Services, U.S. Pharmacopeia*

*Co-Chair: Gail Seawright, Director of National Accounts, Loews Ventana Canyon*



## Community Services Committee

A slightly new direction and exciting goals were presented to the Community Services Committee in 2013. We were tasked with focusing on larger projects that would engage more chapter members throughout the year. The committee voted and with the Board's approval, Hospitality High School DC (HHS) was established as the Chapter's charity of the year. HHS was chosen in an effort to focus on education and shaping the future of our industry while keeping our efforts local.

During 2013 the committee and chapter volunteers participated in a few major events. While our new direction meant eliminating some of our small volunteer commitments, we kept as many of our great partnerships with local charities as we could.

- April kicked off the year with 17 volunteers participating in the N Street Village Annual Gala Fundraiser. Held at the Ritz Carlton Washington, DC, the Gala raised over \$640,000. PCMA volunteers helped with setting up the event, registration, selling raffle tickets, and VIP guest management.
- In June, a group of 20 volunteers got their hands dirty and assisted with building and growing the urban demonstration garden at the Capital Area Food Bank Garden.
- The committee added some community service flair to the networking reception held on October 2nd at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel. Members assembled 300 Clean the World hygiene kits. Thanks to Marriott for sponsoring, the chapter was able to provide hygiene kits to three very grateful DC shelters: Calvary Women's Shelter, N Street Village and Central Union Mission/ part of Gospel Rescue Ministries.
- N Street Village held its annual Help the Homeless Walkathon on October 19 where 20 chapter volunteers showed support and assisted with various duties to help the day's events run smoothly.
- This year for the annual Service in Sync event, 78 volunteers sorted food at the Capital Area Food Bank Warehouse in Northeast DC on November 7.

A HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who served on the committee or volunteered this year! We hope to continue to grow our list of volunteers and appreciate everyone's support in giving back to our community. •

*Chair: Amanda Clark, CMP, Manager Conferences & Meetings, National Association of Counties*

*Co-Chair: Regina Rink, CASE, Director of National Accounts, Greater Phoenix Convention & Visitors Bureau*

## Emerging Professionals Committee

We are proud to report that Emerging Professional Committee (EPC) had a banner year! The number of volunteers who participated, plus the amount of passion, ideas and enthusiasm that they put forth each month was excellent. Thank you to our amazing committee members for all your hard work and dedication towards our mission of providing professional development to students and hospitality industry members with 0-5 years of experience. We continue to reach this goal by focusing on five key areas:

**EDUCATION** - It was another extremely successful year for our four education events. Thank you champions, speakers and sponsors for making these professional development opportunities possible!

**OUTREACH AND "GENERATION MEET" BLOG** - The inaugural year for the blog has been very successful and continues to be updated with current events, articles, and job/internship postings. Our impact and number of followers continue to grow dramatically. Thank you so much to all authors for contributing articles. In addition to the blog, the subcommittee made a total of 12 visits to DC Metro Area Universities and High Schools to enhance the student experience and speak about PCMA.

**CAREER CENTER** - During the course of the year, EPC posted over fifteen job and internship opportunities. Please continue to send any new opportunities!

**MENTORING** - EPC made six mentorship pairs this year, offering those with less than 5 years of experience in the industry the support and guidance of a seasoned industry veteran who will help them further develop as they start off in their careers. Thank you mentors, protégés, and trackers!

**SHADOWING** - The shadowing program really made great strides in 2013. During the course of the year EPC coordinated six successful shadowing opportunities, giving students firsthand experience in the field. Opportunities included: Capital Hilton – site inspection, Springtime in the Park, Courtesy Associates/Dept of Energy Bio-Mass Annual Convention, Meeting Management Services, Meetings Management Group, and EPC August Capital Classroom.

We look forward to another successful year in 2014 and welcoming Sheryl Brannon as Co-Chair! •

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*Chair: Mary Beth Baluta, Regional Director of Sales, Cincinnati USA Convention & Visitors Bureau*  
*Co-Chair: Mindy Halpert, Conference Manager, Consortium for School Networking*

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## Marketing Committee

The main goal of the 2013 Marketing Committee was to increase member engagement in chapter activities by developing targeted marketing to planners and suppliers and increasing our social media presence.

Key Accomplishments include:

- Introduced and innovated communication tools like our online newsletter “What’s New, What’s Next?” and utilizing LinkedIn and FaceBook as real methods of communication with both members and non-members.
- Developed targeted marketing for registration invites that send separate messages to planners and suppliers to highlighting the ROI of attending upcoming chapter meetings and events as it pertains to YOU.
- Increased the number of our Capital Chapter FaceBook followers and active viewers by more than 20% (now at 653 likes!)
- Conducted a FaceBook Contest at Convening Leaders – This not only brought new followers and increased engagement but the winner became a new PCMA member and a new Capital Chapter sponsor!
- Better promotion of all events and sponsors via postings to FaceBook and LinkedIn.
- Beginning in March, Capital Chapter meetings and attendee testimonials were captured on video. We look forward to using this footage to develop new marketing tools in 2014.
- Launch of the PCMA Capital Chapter YouTube Channel (so we can post those great videos!)
- Developed social media usage guidelines for the entire chapter to identify parameters for posting and encourage all members to actively post and exchange ideas on all Capital Chapter social media outlets.
- Initiated a marketing calendar and plan that timelines a strategy for marketing all of the chapters events and activities making our marketing more proactive.

We had a busy, yet fun year and thank everyone who worked with us! We have only just begun as our great committee has grown from 4 committee members to 10! We look forward to continued success in 2014 and invite you to join us. •

### Get involved and Stay Informed!

#### FaceBook

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/PCMA-Capital-Chapter>

#### LinkedIn

<http://www.linkedin.com/groups/PCMA-Capital-Chapter>

#### Twitter

<https://twitter.com/PCMACC>

#### YouTube

<http://www.youtube.com/user/PCMACapitalChapter/videos>

*Chair: John Rubsamen*  
*Director of Meetings and Events, Americans for the Arts*

*Co-Chair: Jamie Rice*  
*Regional Director, National Accounts*  
*Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau*



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### ***20% Discount on PCMA Career Center Job Posting***

Recruit top talent in the meetings and convention industry by posting a position on the PCMA Career Center.

Post your position before December 31, 2013 to save 20% off a single 30 day job posting.

Simply visit [careers.pcma.org](http://careers.pcma.org) and enter in the promotional code **FALL2013**.

## Membership Committee

The membership committee is responsible for membership recruitment, recognition and retention for the Capital Chapter.

In 2012, it was the year of change; however, in 2013 we continued to carry out what was implemented and focused on maintaining our outstanding status. In addition, the Membership Committee made welcomed new members with phone calls as well as sent e-cards to all those celebrating birthdays, anniversaries or just newly joined to the Capital Chapter. Furthermore, the Membership Committee recognized a total of 4 Stars of the Quarter and 7 Stars of the Year from each committee.

We also managed to award 3 fantastic planners for Chapter scholarships. The Membership Committee produced a volunteer flyer for The Event in order to enhance awareness of the volunteer committees available to get involved with the Capital Chapter. Above all, the Membership Committee made monthly phone calls to retain and reach prospective members and managed to hold 10% retention rate.

Finally, we took major steps toward becoming a more diverse and inclusive premier meeting organization by partnering with the Network of Latino Meeting Professionals to increase awareness of PCMA to their members so that one day, they too may join PCMA. Thanks to all your HARD WORK Membership Committee! •

*Chair: DeVonne Parks, CEM, Independent Planner*

*Co-Chair: GERALYN KRIST, CMP, National Accounts Manager, Kansas City Convention & Visitors Association*

## Professional Development Committee

The goal of the Program Development Committee (PDC) is to provide a variety of programs to the membership, which offers outstanding education and the opportunity to network and share best practices. We met and exceeded this goal in 2013 and I want to thank the PDC volunteers who committed their time and effort in making sure every event was a success and flawless. In addition, we couldn't have been successful without the help of the sponsorship committee for securing fabulous venues and sponsors and the marketing committee for helping us put a little sizzle into the marketing of our events.



We had an aggressive year, offering nine events to the membership. One of our major accomplishments was securing three Best In Class speakers for the education meetings. The speakers addressed evaluating and implementing risk management plans, understanding the impact of meeting design and the needs of your attendees and provided us with tools to help us find the leader from within, no matter what our role is in our organizations. Our two planner workshops included our first joint meeting with the Emerging Professional's Committee. Planners who attended our second workshop were able to see the process that occurs when PCMA HQ plans the educational content for conventions. We offered for the first time, CEU's to four out of the five meetings, which will be continued in the future. We had record attendance at our popular networking events which included the chapter reception at Convening Leaders, Mix and Bowl and Nats Baseball game.

We hope you were able to apply key takeaways from the educational meetings into your daily profession and establish new contacts, while catching up with friends at our networking events. Get ready for what we have planned for you next year! •

*Chair: Stacey Knoppel, Director of Sales and Marketing, Baltimore Convention Center*

*Co-Chair: Lisa French, Senior Sales Manager, Hilton Baltimore*

***The Capital Chapter is in need of an additional production editor to join the ranks. If you have graphic layout skills and are well versed in InDesign and Photoshop, we'd love to talk to you. Please send an email to [pcmachatter@gmail.com](mailto:pcmachatter@gmail.com).***

# Sponsorship Committee

## Our Sponsors Make It Happen

Thanks to the generous support of our 2013 sponsors, the PCMA Capital Chapter was fortunate enough to secure eleven Platinum, seven Gold, two Silver, eleven Bronze, four Annual in-kind and six various other levels of sponsorship to bring education, networking and professional development to our members. You may have also enjoyed exploring the creative advertisements placed in the Chatter and our e-newsletter as our supplier partners vie for your attention and business.

We could not keep our chapter in solid financial standing without the support of our incredibly generous sponsors and advertisers. Our 21-member Sponsorship Committee worked tirelessly throughout the year to secure host venues in a robust economy and program and speaker sponsors to ensure our operating costs were covered. The Sponsorship Committee continues to work on the chapter's behalf to renew sponsors and secure new partnerships for 2014. We strive to identify unique venues for events and are always on the lookout for what's new. If you have a suggested venue or sponsor that you think we should reach out to, we'd love to hear about it.

Interested in being a part of the committee? We'd love to have you! Please reach out to current chair, Mary Gallagher (mgallagher@sanfrancisco.travel) or current co-chair and incoming chair in 2014, Leah Jones (leah.jones@aftermarket.org) with any suggestions on venues, sponsors, committee participation or suggestions on how we can better serve you.

Just in case you wanted to see who our sponsors are, check out the last page in your latest Chatter newsletter. We recognize our sponsors throughout the year in print, on social media, through event marketing and at events.

For our planner friends, please consider giving our sponsors an opportunity to bid on your business, it will increase their ROI and give you some great options to consider! THANK YOU to our committee for their efforts this past year and to our generous sponsors and advertisers for their support of the PCMA Capital Chapter. •

*Chair: Mary Gallagher, CMP, Director, Citywide Accounts – Eastern Region, San Francisco Travel Association*

*Co-Chair: Leah Jones, CMP, Director, Meetings and Events, Automotive Aftermarket Industry Association*

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PCMA Capital Chapter  
THE EVENT at Arena Stage  
November 18, 2013  
Photos courtesy of Chuck Fazio Photography





## 2013 Star of the Year Winners – PCMA Capital Chapter

The Capital Chapter is full of stars but some deserve special recognition. The following awards were present to Capital Chapter members who have provided superlative service or achieved excellence in 2013.

President's Award: **MARY GALLAGHER, CMP**, San Francisco Travel

Rising Star of the Year: **JOHN RUBSAMEN**, Americans for the Arts

Communications Committee: **KARI KING, CMP**, National Defense Industrial Association

Community Service Committee: **PETER O'BRIEN**, Marriott Global Sales

Emerging Professionals Committee: **MINDY HALPERT**, Consortium for School Networking

Marketing Committee: **JAMES GILDEA**, Omni National Sales

Membership Committee: **MELISSA TIGHE**, Starwood National Sales

Professional Development Committee: **JIM KELLEY**, PRG, LLC

Sponsorship Committee: **CECILIA BELL**, IHG-Intercontinental Hotels Group





# Capital Chapter Member Spotlights

## Spotlight on a Supplier

*Megan Sherman  
Vice President, Event Services  
Sherman Hospitality | HIP Network*



While studying for her B.S. with a concentration in tourism and Event Management at Penn State University, Megan's sorority rush chair, Erin Tench, introduced her to the meeting and events industry. Erin was keeping Megan up to date on the meetings industry in DC by sending her publications like this very Chatter and inviting Megan to shadow her on events.

Originally from Reading PA, Megan moved to DC after graduation to start her career. Megan served as Manager of Meetings for the National Apartment Association, Director of Sales GEP Washington, and now, her own venture. Highlights include the people she's met and the relationships she's made through the industry. Not to drop names, but meeting Archie and Payton Manning have given her a pretty good cocktail party story that will last for ages.

Megan has always been involved in industry organizations, sitting on the Board of PMPI 2007 – 2009. She has recently joined the Capital Chapter Communications Committee and looks forward the press of her first article, the first of many we hope.

However, her favorite benefit of the industry is how she met her husband. After a year of working together, but never actually meeting, Megan met Dan Sherman at an industry networking event (go figure) and never looked back. In 2008 they started the HIP Network together and have seen it grow and change significantly in the past six years. And their next big venture has already taken flight, Sherman Hospitality, an innovative event services firm, specializing in transportation, event design and execution. We wish them all the success in the world. •

*by Shannon Burke, CMP  
Director of Conference and Meetings  
National Association for College Admission Counseling*

## Spotlight on a Planner

*Tanya Barrett, CMP, CEM  
Manager, Meeting Services  
U.S. Pharmacopeia*



Tanya Barrett has had a very busy 2013. Not only did she have a full time position as a Meeting Manager at U. S. Pharmacopeia, but she was the Chair of the PCMA Capital Chapter Communications Committee, served as a board member for Friends of Gum Spring Library, earned her CEM, and graduated from the University

of Maryland University College with a bachelor's degree in Communications!

Tanya got her start in the meetings industry when she did an internship at DynCorp in Reston, Virginia. While her primary responsibility was writing and editing, periodically she was assigned to plan various events and meetings. At the end of her internship, Tanya was told that while she had good writing and editing skills, she truly excelled at meeting planning. She's been on the hospitality/meeting industry path ever since.

Eight years ago, she joined PCMA. Throughout the years, Tanya has volunteered on committees and mentored young professionals. Her favorite part of PCMA is Convening Leaders. She's totally hooked on the 15 minute hands-on technical sessions.

I was quite surprised to learn that Tanya's true passion is amusement parks, especially steel roller coasters. Her current position allows her to take every other Friday off during the summer and Tanya took full advantage of the day off to visit amusement parks up and down the East Coast. All of her travels have earned her the right to cast her Golden Ticket vote for "The Best of the Best Amusement Parks". •

*by Gail Seawright  
Director of National Accounts, Loews Ventana Canyon*





## News Bytes

Email your news: [PCMAchatter+news@gmail.com](mailto:PCMAchatter+news@gmail.com)

**KAYCE HENDERSON** IS NOW MEETINGS MANAGER AT J. SPARGO & ASSOCIATES.

**JANEÉ PELLETIER, MBA, CMP** IS EXCITED TO JOIN THE HOSPITALITY DEPARTMENT AT HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE AS A PART-TIME FACULTY MEMBER. JANEÉ WILL BE TEACHING HCC'S EVENT MANAGEMENT CLASS IN SPRING 2014.

THE CAPITAL CHAPTER IS SO PROUD OF THE FOUR MEMBERS BEING RECOGNIZED AT CONVENING LEADERS IN BOSTON FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS:

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE YEAR AWARD  
**MARY GALLAGHER**

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD  
**JIM KELLEY**

OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE CHAPTER AWARD  
**JANEÉ PELLETIER**

EMERGING LEADER AWARD  
**USHMA SUVARNAKAR**



## Mark Your Calendar

Please join us for these upcoming events. Visit our chapter website for more details and to register: [www.pcma.org/connect-and-grow/chapters/capital](http://www.pcma.org/connect-and-grow/chapters/capital)

- 1/12 Capital Chapter & Chesapeake Chapter Reception at Convening Leaders**  
5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.  
Fairmont Copley Plaza, Boston, MA  
Registration will open mid-December
- 2/20 Webcast: Demystifying the CMP Exam for Young Professionals**  
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
Registration TBA
- 2/21 Education Program TBA**  
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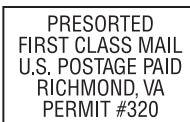


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