



the official newsletter of the pcma capital chapter

Convening Leaders - Disruption Played a Big Part of the Focus

Convening Leaders 2016 proved to be one of the most inspiring, invigorating and very ambitious conferences offered in a long time. Kelly Peacy and her team really out did themselves by incorporating new ideas such as a heavy emphasis on wellness and taking the learning outside of the classroom. A row of exhibitors featured the latest in technology and services. There was also a post conference component called Women @ Work.

The General Sessions seemed to be the real hit of the If you missed these daily programs, you missed how disruption plays a part in everything we do and everything that is happening in our industry. Disruption isn't a bad thing. It's the new reality.

Here are some highlights, but if you really want to know more, watch the rebroadcast on February 9 of the general sessions.

Arne Sorenson, Mergers and Disruptions and Provocations, Oh My



Everyone is talking Marriott about International buying Starwood, Sorenson, President and CEO of Marriott, emphasized Marriott's commitment serving the customer. This is one way they will be able to

continue to do so. With the help of Mel Robbins moderating the conversation, Sorenson talked about the impact trends such as Uber and Airbnb have on our conferences and the attendee experience.

Jonah Berger, Crafting Contagious Ideas

How do you get noticed? How do you drive attendance at your conferences? How do you use social media to get your message out? Are you disrupting the "norm" and generating word of mouth for your

conferences? Give them something to remember. Make your conferences catch on through the message and not necessarily the messenger.

Gretchen Rubin, Mastering the Habits of Our Everyday

Disruption continued when author Gretchen suggested that changing habits can help us achieve our life's goals. We can infuse our professional goals with new energy and life by simply changing "how we always do



Amy Purdy, Living Beyond Limits

The first time I saw Amy was on Dancing with the Stars. I loved her spirit, I loved that she was handicapable and I

loved her attitude. I also loved her as the closing general session speaker. Her life was disrupted when she was diagnosed with meningitis and lost both legs below the knee at the age of nineteen; and then



again at twenty-one, when she needed a kidney transplant. Amy turned these disruptions into new possibilities that helped her achieve her dream of traveling the world.

How are we handling disruptions in our life and using them to achieve our dreams? How do we disrupt our organizations by doing things differently? Until we try, we don't know how successful we'll be. After all, PCMA disrupts Convening Leaders every year and we continue to look to it as our standard for excellence. •

> by Annette Suriani, CMP, Chief Meeting Strategist, AMS Meeting Solutions

The PCMA Capital Chapter is where "You Belong"!

Mission: The mission of PCMA and the Chapter is to be the leading organization for meeting and event professionals by delivering superior and innovative education and promoting the value of professional convention management.



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Joy Womack, CMP 703.239.7504 Joy.womack@experient-inc.com

President-Elect

Diane Kovats, CAE, CMP International Society for Computational Biology 760-522-8805 dkovats@iscb.org

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Immediate Past President

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Mary Beth Baluta, Cincinnati Convention and Visitors Bureau 703.892.0330; mbbaluta@cincyusa.com Mindy Halpert, CMP, Consotium for School Networking 202.410.2778; mhalpert@cosn.org Jim Kelley, PRG Corporate & Tradeshow Services 404,214.4833; jkelley@prg.com Geralyn Krist, CMP, CTA, Visit Kansas City 816.691.3822; gkrist@visitkc.com John Rubsamen, Americans for the Arts 202.371.2830x2008; jrubsamen@artsusa.org Malene Ward, CMP, CEM, Direct Marketing Association 202.861.2429; mward@the-dma.org

Committee Chairs

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Jennifer Haire, CMP, National Center for State Courts

Peter O'Brien, CMP, CASE, Marriott International

Jeanette Naiman, CMP, AMSUS-The Society for Federal Health

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Rosa Mendosa-Friedheim, CASE, CDMP, Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau

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Professional Development

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Rebecca Ramsey, Greater Madison Convention & Visitors Bureau Liz Dane, St. Petersburg Clearwater Area CVB

Chapter Liaison to PCMA National Board of Directors

Tamela Blalock, MTA, CMP, National Association of Wholesale Distributors

Capital Chapter: pcmainfo@ascent-management.com

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



Message from the Board

Diane Kovats, CMP, CAE Executive Director International Society for Computational Biology



I learned, I laughed, I hugged, and I even shed a few tears - not just because of emotionally charged content but also because some mornings felt spectacularly early after staying out inadvisably late! But the long days were worth it, While Convening Leaders has always given me a renewed sense of spirit, determination, and motivation, I walked away from this year's

conference in Vancouver with much more.

I was educated on the significance of White Space, learning that life isn't just about checking off a long list of to-do's and climbing the ladder but also taking moments to breathe, relax, and ponder. Juliet Funt, a profound and talented speaker, emotionally affected me as I realized that I have occasionally allowed the "rat race" to get in the way of what is truly important in life – health, family, and friends.

The inspirational Amy Purdy taught me that hardships in life do not define our path; rather, that we should draw encouragement from them in order to drive us to greater heights and achievements. I became energized upon discovering the power of story, understanding that it takes just one impactful experience to drive our events and organizations forward.

I was reminded of the importance of surrounding yourself with people who can provide you with balance. I learned how we can come together to help one another achieve our goals in leadership and overcome barriers that appear before us. I grasped that the career path may not always be vertical but is horizontal at times, and that achieving greatness is possible no matter who you are or where you come from.

This year's theme of Convening Leaders was "Cultivating Creative Moments," and PCMA and the city of Vancouver achieved just that. Hopefully you were able to cultivate your own creativity and enjoy many memorable moments, and that you will incorporate all that you learned in your everyday lives. Congratulations to the PCMA team, the city of Vancouver, and Tourism Vancouver on a job well done, and I look forward to seeing you at the many PCMA Capital Chapter events throughout the year. •











Hospitality Helping Hands (HHH) has become the Convening Leaders event that I look most forward to attending. I don't even mind the early hour. PCMA has a more than 20-year tradition of giving back to the community - long before Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was a term. For those who have yet to attend Convening Leaders, HHH helps to kick off the convention on Sunday.

It was still dark in Vancouver as the group gathered for breakfast to fuel up for the work ahead. A favorite aspect of HHH is the chance to connect with other attendees in a completely different and collaborative way. At breakfast, we learned that this year, PCMA partnered with Engagement Unlimited and Britannia Community Services.

The need to play, both in personal and professional lives, was a strong theme throughout the entire convention. This playfulness was apparent in our HHH project, assisting at two in-need daycares: Grandview Terrace Childcare Society & Mount Pleasant Childcare Society. HHH participants were split into two groups and loaded on buses to each of the daycares.

Participants could select from various activities including painting the facilities, creating "mud kitchens", fence art, and much more. "Mud kitchens" allow the children to use their imagination outside while honing their fine motor skills inside with the use of kitchen utensils. We were fortunate to have some of the daycare staff as well as the children's parents work alongside us. As they did so, they expressed their deep appreciation for our efforts which helped to freshen up and brighten the daycares.

All HHH participants reconnected when we returned to a networking lunch to recognize the HHH sponsors - GES, Experient, Inc., and Marriott Convention & Resort Network. In addition to the hard work from the participants, PCMA presented the daycares with a check for \$2,762.00. We were all sent a video filmed by Engagement Unlimited of the day's work, as well as footage of the daycare children seeing these improvements for the first time. It was a rewarding day all around! .

by Will Trokey, National Sales Manager, Visit Charlotte



Connect with the Capital Chapter!



Connecting with the Capital Chapter is not just about tracking what we are up to. We want to see what you are



PCMA Capital Chapter has become the first PCMA chapter to have an Instagram account because we believe in being creative and having fun with our communication. However, it is only as good as our members make it, so start shooting and posting today!

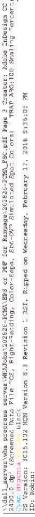


Follow us @pcmacapitalchapter and remember to tag us in your spring meeting photos as well by adding us into the comments or tag section. •





Convening Leaders in Review







Being your best in 2016 starts with a strong and healthy self. This year, Convening Leaders emphasized health at The Wellness Stop, located in the open space Learning Lounge. The Stop featured 15-minute "byte-size" talks on a series of personal and conference wellness topics including: Your Energy Boost and Focus (with food), Best Practices for Bone Health, Re-Energize, Re-Focus and De-Stress with Mindfulness, Sitting is the New Smoking (at work), An Intro to Pole Walking, Become a Conference Wellness





Superstar, Mindfulness in the Real World (Mindful Eating), Combatting Sitting is the New Smoking (in everyday life), Fitness for Travelers, Yoga, and an On-the-Go Fitness Break. All interactive sessions had a wellness challenge, a food activity, or live exercises done in conference attire. One-on-one wellness coaching appointments were also offered in 15-minute time slots. Participants brought their questions/concerns and/or completed a wellness assessment and created a wellness vision for 2016. The Stop concluded with attendees taking an urban pole walk along the stunning Vancouver seawall using ergonomic poles supplied from a Vancouver-based company.

Wellness is very relevant to today's conference attendee as evidenced by the full sessions, with participants and observers standing outside the lounge area. The fitness/ wellness tip sheets flew off the racks, with healthy eating and office exercises being the most popular.

Take aways:

- Food impacts the body and brain at conferences and work
- Sitting for extended periods of time is a health hazard, regardless of how fit you are
- Mind-body breaks (deep breathing and relaxation, walking meditation, and yoga practice) help you destress
- Stand up desks, "deskercises," chair abs and strength training using resistance bands combat sitting disease and improve bone health
- Come off autopilot by slowing down, living in the present, and eating mindfully -taking in the process of eating and the joy of sitting down to a meal

Ambient noise in an open learning area was a challenge at 2015 Convening Leaders Wellness Theater in Chicago. PCMA listened to attendee feedback. The solution: wireless headsets that enabled participants to hear the talks and create a private, intimate experience for yoga and mindfulness. •

— by Kim Bercovitz, Ph.D., President & Chief Exercise Officer, Exercise Bytes

The 5 Choices to Extraordinary Productivity

I don't make New Year's resolutions but I do find ways to better myself every January. This is why I love Convening Leaders. It jumpstarts those initiatives with engaging classes and the sharing of ideas to improve my work and myself.

With overall self-improvement in mind, I attended "The 5 Choices to Extraordinary Productivity" presented by Lenna Rinne from FranklinCovey. The description sounded promising: Increase focus on your highest priorities, reduce distractions and identify your most important roles to balance the many demands. Yes! You have my attention.

Rinne compared the daily onslaught of information and requests to gravel. One email, a pebble, but in numbers it is like being buried in gravel. Using this analogy, she discussed five simple steps to becoming more productive.

We need to: 1 - Act on the important and 2 - Go for the extraordinary. What is most important to you? In which roles do we want to be extraordinary? What tasks achieve these goals? These tasks become our "boulders." Boulders might be a budget deadline for your planner role, your workout for your triathlete role or a date night for your spouse role.

Step 3 - Schedule your boulders, important tasks, on your calendar. During that time ignore everything else! This can be difficult, which leads us to step 4 - Rule your technology.

In today's society it is both easy and difficult to be productive due to technology! We have great tools to assist us in managing the chaos. But it is technology in and of itself that often causes all the additional distractions. We need to shut off the ping of a new email or leave it behind altogether during our "boulder" times. It will all be waiting for you after you've completed your "boulder" task. Without those distractions you've probably finished that task with more focus and produced a better product.

Step 5 - is simple, none of this can be accomplished if you are exhausted. Schedule "me" time and rejuvenate.

So what are you going to do to better yourself this year? How about trying Rinne's rules and attacking those boulders, making way for extraordinary productivity. •

——— by Belinda (Bel) Humes Hanson, Coordinator, Operations and Programs, International Society for Computational Biology PCMA 2016 Convening Leaders Scholarship Winner

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Convening Leaders in Review | 5







From the stellar opening event to the stay-andplay adventures, the general sessions to the serendipitous meetings in the Knowledge Den or over the lunch table, Convening Leaders really lived up to its theme of "cultivating

creative moments." There were ample opportunities to interact, interesting sessions and speakers to get attendees thinking, and even a little bit of whitespace to absorb new knowledge, grab a moment of zen, or relax with a craft.

Engagement was a recurring theme throughout many of the learning opportunities. It's always top of mind for event professionals, whether they're drawing audiences to the event itself or creating new ways to connect on the show floor and beyond.

One track of breakout sessions focused on the connection of data and engagement, helping to demystify the tools and tactics that can be used to collect key data to learn more about what attendees want and need. A key takeaway that was repeated across sessions was not just the importance of collecting data, but using those metrics to create an experience that meet the objectives at hand—not just attendee objectives, but your organization's objectives and your sponsors' as well.

Other sessions focused on the creative ways that events can utilize personalization; using the kinds of intelligence you can get from data analytics to get incredibly specific and create events that prove that you understand attendee needs, all while providing engaging, interesting content that creates value and keeps them coming back for more.

We learned how personalization is key to appealing to target audiences and creating content that resonates with what they want. If we provide targeted engagements for the audiences that make them want to share their experiences, we can extend our reach past the event and even the attendees.

By giving attendees a chance to experience many different engagement tactics during the event, it brought the learning to life in a hands-on way that goes far beyond a single session. That made this year's PCMA's Convening Leaders more than just a conference—it was a living case study on event planning and engagement in action. •

> – by Bob Lueke, Director, Business Development, Freeman Washington, DC



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PCMA by the Parties

Celebrations, Parties, Festivities...PCMA's Convening Leaders could certainly be described as a collection of these. The actual schedule emphasizes first-class education and networking opportunities, but the fact of the matter is that PCMA knows how to accomplish many goals—a good time being one of them! Each evening PCMA and its partners come together to create their own stunning experiences for each attendee.

The opening reception, held in the West Building of the Vancouver Convention Center, was no exception. Upon entering, attendees were greeted by a very adept trapeze artist/bartender who would pour your wine while soaring through the air with the greatest of ease. Throughout the event, Vancouver's excellent creativity was put on display with amazing ice sculptures, a mechanical giant that attendees could control, fortune tellers and many other experiences. Each quadrant of the room featured a different delicious cuisine. This event offered a view into how to transform an exhibit hall into a spectacular interactive event space. In addition, many hotel and city partners hosted their own events across Vancouver at the city's best restaurants and event venues.

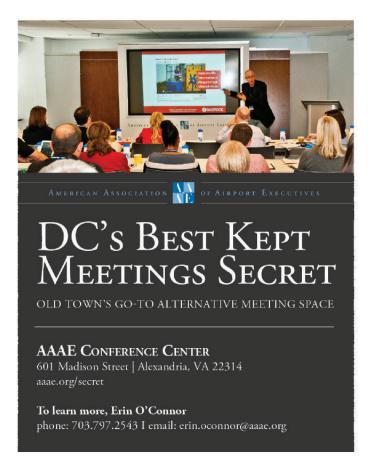
The PCMA Foundation charity event, Party with a Purpose, was held in the Sheraton Vancouver Wall Center. The event's theme each year seems to "up the ante" on the celebrations all for a good cause.

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GES. The Art and Science of Engagement	Austin - CHARTINE VISION SERVED - CONVENTION GENTER	HOUSTON
V	enue Sponsors	, T
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The final night's event brought attendees back to the convention center, but to a new and undiscovered East Building location. Pitched as Canada's House Party, each DMO from Canada focused on a theme to put their best foot forward. Whether your favorite spot was the indoor fire pits, the relaxing foot massage station, the throwback party games, such as life-size jenga and beer pong, or rocking out on the dance floor—everyone found a spot that made them feel right at home.

Thanks to everyone who pulled together these awesome experiences. Cheers! •

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



Opening Reception













All photos by Jacob Slaton

Convening Leaders in Review





It is true what they say. Time certainly flies by—I cannot believe that it has been almost a month since we were all together in Vancouver, British Columbia. And now that I have had some time to reflect, I can honestly say without question that I thoroughly enjoyed my first PCMA Convening Leaders experience! From the destination and its setting, the Center and its views to the hotels and the food scene, I was beyond impressed. Let me tell you a little bit about my four days in Vancouver.

The thing that really jumped out at me and I appreciated the most about Convening Leaders were the educational opportunities. It was my first convention experience that was geared equally towards both suppliers and planners. I relished the opportunity to grow alongside my customers, walking through the learning process with them and actively sharing in education that felt pertinent to me. There were panel discussions that incited lively dialogue about trends and the future of our industry and which opened my eyes towards what is to come. I also loved that session topics were intended to benefit both my work life and my personal life. I felt that I left the conference more well-rounded because of it, with takeaways that I can now apply to many facets of my life.

Now can we talk about the events and networking opportunities?! Everywhere I turned I ran into new acquaintances or clients. The conference took advantage of every free minute to promote networking opportunities—there seemed to be a place to connect around every corner, and people were actually receptive to it! Clients and suppliers that I had not met before were open to striking up a conversation with someone new and sharing their experiences. It was great spending one-on-one time with my customers in a different

environment, getting to know them better in both a social and educational setting.

While this was just a small snapshot of my experience, I hope that you can see how fantastic it was to be a first-timer at #PCMACL. I can't wait for my next PCMA experience in 2017! Hope to see you in Austin (if not before)! •

– by Alison R. Ricketts, Convention Sales Manager, Destination DC

Advocacy Corner

What does it mean to advocate? What makes a good advocate? What does it mean to support a cause? These are only some of the questions that we hope to answer each month in the new Advocacy Corner. We also hope to encourage you to participate in advocating for our industry. You can begin doing this by attending the Global Meetings Industry Day (GMID) on April 14, 2016. GMID will showcase the real impact that business meetings, conferences, conventions, incentive travel, trade shows and exhibitions have on people, business and communities.

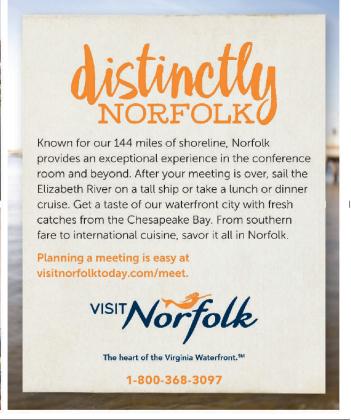
The PCMA Capital Chapter Advocacy Task Force is working on the annual Rally that will feature speakers addressing global, national and local perspectives that affect small business, associations, transportation and a myriad of other ancillary services and how what you do has a major impact on society.

So mark your calendar for April 14 and join us at the Omni Shoreham to celebrate advocacy. Watch the Corner for more information. •

by Annette Suriani, CMP, Chief Meeting-Strategist, AMS Meeting Solutions







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Convening Leaders 20 in their **Twenties Award Experience**

Everyone in this business knows that life as a meeting planner can be charitably described as controlled chaos. Some days are marked by the sinking realization that the flight carrying the event's three co-chairs has been canceled and one-third of your attendees have been walked. Most days, we bolt from one meeting to the next, crossing tasks off our to-do lists and reconciling the bill. Then, it's on the next event.

Often, there isn't time to stop and reflect—we are too busy trying to plan the next meeting or forestall the current crisis. Applying for this honor, however, forced me to take that moment. And, I'm so thankful that it did. The last five years of organizing conferences for the American Association for Cancer Research has allowed me to play a small role in the ongoing effort to prevent and treat cancer. Personally, it has been an opportunity for me to grow and mature—and learn how to keep smiling even when things don't seem to be going as planned.

Being chosen as one of these talented group of young professionals was an incredible honor. I traveled to Convening Leaders in Vancouver for a week of education and relationship building that is essential in our industry. I engaged in meaningful conversations with industry leaders on everything from room sets to career development. I encountered suppliers from all over the country who I had only "met" via telephone or email. The exposure to new mentors, different sectors of the industry, and PCMA's vast resources was invaluable.

I can only say thank you to PCMA and the Austin CVB for supporting an award and unparalleled educational experience that prompted me to stop and reflect on our industry and our great accomplishments. I hope to stay involved and inspire the next group of young professionals. •

> by Lauren Santarone, CMP, Senior Meetings Manager, American Association for Cancer Research

PCMA Capital and Chesapeake Chapter Reception

The Fairmont Hotel Vancouver welcomed guests into its newly renovated, beautiful zen lobby and invited them to join in the celebration with a familiar rhythm of networking and fun. This reception combined members from both the Capital and Chesapeake chapters, allowing them to mix, mingle and celebrate kicking off Convening Leaders 2016. The event was set for a crowd, with a live band, delicious hors d'oeuvres displays, and signature libations. The pop-up candy shop even included cotton candy clouds as a delectable sweet. Special thanks to our sponsors: San Jose, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, and PSAV. Photos courtesy of Christie's Photographic Solutions. •

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















Member Spotlights

Spotlight on a Planner

Sara Haywood Director, Strategic Projects Association of American Geographers (AGA)



Sara Haywood got an early start planning special events. As a student at Indiana University, she was a member of the Union Board, which was responsible for special events on campus. When she came to Washington, DC, she discovered that event planning was actually a career! She began planning at the American Council on Education. From there, she spent three years at the U. S. Building Council, where she learned a lot about "green" meetings. Before joining AAG last August, she gained further

experience at the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC). What does Sara likes best about her work? "Seeing all of the team's efforts coming together; seeing attendees energized, ready to go out and fulfill the mission of the organization," she said.

Sara joined PCMA in 2007, and soon after, the Professional Development Committee. She was Vice Chair of the committee in 2015, and Chair in 2016. She served on the 2013 task force to revamp the Capital Chapter annual meeting. Sara was the Capital Chapter Star of the 4th Quarter in 2014.

Sara shares her home with her tabby cat, Leopold, whom she adopted when he was eight weeks old (he is now 16)! For leisure activities, she said "If you find me on the water – canoeing, kayaking, paddle boating - I am happy!" She also loves to travel, and has visited Spain, Germany, Greece, Turkey and Mexico in the last two years. •

> by Sara Torrence, CMP Emeritus, President, Sara Torrence and Associates



In 2015, our Community Services Committee selected DC Greens as our Charity of the Year. Through various events at the K Street Farm and the generous bidders at the Silent Auction in November, our PCMA Capital Chapter was able to donate \$5,300 to DC Greens! In the words of the DC Greens

Executive Director, Lauren Schweder, Biel "We are simply blown away by the gift from the PCMA Capital Chapter. We are so grateful for this support - it will really provide meaningful support to our food access and food education programs in the coming year." •

Spotlight on a Supplier

David Giger Senior Director, Sales & Ind. Relations Hilton Worldwide



Who's attended the last 34 consecutive PCMA Annual meetings and is a cofounder of the PCMA Foundation Dinner? This guy! David Giger, Senior Director-Sales & Industry Relations for Hilton Worldwide, was also a cofounder of our PCMA Capital Chapter and has been instrumental in advancing our industry. David's favorite part of PCMA is "the amazing networking and education".

Born and raised in Pittsburgh, he's spent his entire career of 40+ years with Hilton, and is proud to have been awarded Hilton's Circle of Excellence not just once, but FOUR times, most recently last year! He was also named Association Trends' Industry Partner of the Year in 2013.

He spends his spare time with photography, music (all genres!), many social outings, sometimes at local wineries, and reading Washingtonian, Popular Photography and Consumer Reports. He also enjoys his getaway home at Deep Creek Lake with his wife, Mary, and their 2 dogs. David and Mary met at an industry tradeshow (of course) and look forward to their next dream vacation, a third European Cruise.

When asked to share insight and words of wisdom on this industry, David's recommendation is to "work hard at what you do, but really have lots of fun doing it too!" Thank you Dave, for sharing your passion, commitment and dedication with the PCMA Capital Chapter! We look forward to another 34 years of your insight and humor. •

> by Mary Gallagher, CMP, Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board

PCMA Capital Chapter Launches a New Shadow Program

And we're off! The Emerging Professionals Committee began laying groundwork for a new Shadow Program last year, and our soft launch has begun. Our target market "shadowees" are students and transitioning professionals, and our goal is to offer exposure to the industry "from the inside." In January, two shadow hosts have extended opportunities, and we look forward to hearing about the experiences, both from the shadow hosts and from the shadowees. In the coming months, additional opportunities will be available. Stay tuned for more news on this exciting new addition to our chapter's outreach efforts. For more information, please visit www.generationmeet.com/shadow or email Samantha or Ann at pcmashadow@generationmeet.

by Ann Garvey, CMP, CEM, Director of National Accounts, Eastern Region, Visit Spokane

> Samantha Moore, Manager, Meetings & Exhibits, Community Anti-Drug Coalition of America

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News Bytes

Email your news: PCMAchatter+news@gmail.com

New Designation:

Johnnie White received his CAE certification (ASAE's Certified Association Executive)

Members on the Move:

Laurie Cipriano, CMP is leaving American Education Research Association to go to Investment Company

Amanda Clark is now Senior Meeting Planner at the Office of Meeting Management with the National Governor's Association

Robert Smith, CMP, CMM is leaving American Council for Technology to go to American Educational Research Association

Lance Wheeler became Senior Sales Executive at JW Marriott Washington, DC

Erin Keedy is now a Washington, DC Citywide Sales **Executive for Marriott**



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Mark Your Calendar

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

2/17 Major Hotel Brands & What You Need to Know 3:00 PM - 6:30 PM; House of Sweden

2/23 Mix 'N Bowl Networking 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM; Pinstripes Georgetown

3/10 Capital Classroom 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM; Hotel Monaco DC



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3337 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-5219 Phone: 703.370.7436 x600, Fax: 703.342.4311 Email: PCMAinfo@ascent-management.com

Issue Editors..

Sara Torrence, CMP Emeritus Sara Torrence and Associates saratorrence@att.net

Production Editor..

Tracie Howard, CMP AcademyHealth tracie.howard@academyhealth.org

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