

REGION VIII SUNBEAMS

Volume 3, Issue 7

Summer 2009



NOTES FROM THE RVP

Greetings.

What an incredible year it's been serving as your Regional Vice President. I began with only a few goals: to amend the Code of Ethics, to maintain a policy of fiscal conservatism, and to commit to anything that would make our organization more attractive to young professionals. Along the way, I've been proud of the many small changes made by the National Board, hoping that they will indeed lead to extraordinary results. These include broadening the membership eligibility policy, revamping the national Web Site, and adding some new NAIW courses, including some Webinar classes. We were successful in trade-marking CWC, which now stands for Confidence While Communicating. And yes, the Code of Ethics has been amended. Thanks to Katharine Nohr for suggesting a simple appeals process.

Thank you for all your contributions, support, and committee service for the Regional Conference. Everyone unfailingly mentioned what an awesome job the Insurance Professionals of Salt Lake City did, organizing and running the conference and providing hospitality. I am happy to report that, contrary to rumors, the conference ended in the black, with money left over to help seed future conferences. Elsewhere in this bulletin you can read Quyen Trinh's honest account of it from a First Timer's point of view.

I wish our current economy would have allowed more of you to come to New Orleans for National.

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FROM THE GOLDEN STATE'

Greetings from the Golden State.

It's that time again....time for the changing of the guard. The 2009-2010 Local Association Officers, Council Directors, Regional Vice Presidents and International Officers have all been elected and installed in their new positions. These annual rituals bring new energies, new goals and new commitments. Even though the new terms don't actually start until July 1st, the International Convention is the culmination of this virtual passing of the leadership torch.

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FROM THE GOLDEN STATE CONT'D

And for the California Council, it is time for me to step down from the directorship and for the new Director to step up. Andi Fields Gonzales is poised to take on the challenges and rewards of leading the California Council with fresh ideas and enthusiasm. She will also have the dynamic team of Kathleen Kerstenbeck and Annette Ing-Firmeza working with her to increase our profile in the industry and improve membership numbers and satisfaction. Andi will hit the ground running with a jam-packed Leadership Workshop weekend in July.

At the Region VIII Conference in Salt Lake City, the membership provided me with a new opportunity to serve NAIW members by electing me as the 2009-2010 Regional Vice President. When trying to decide on a theme for my term as RVP, I kept coming back to the phrase "Membership Makes a Difference" along with a vision of a circle. The combination of words and picture just seemed so right to me because NAIW can make such a tremendous difference in the individual member's professional and personal life and the members, in turn, can have such a positive impact on the industry and community. It is this circle of mutual positive impact that truly makes a difference in us all. I look forward to representing the members of Region VIII and being even more involved in our 'Association of Insurance Professionals'.

In fellowship,

Tish Riley, CPIW, DAE CA Council Director
CA Council Director

EDITOR: REGINA LEMANOWICZ

"To know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived, that is to have succeeded."

FROM THE BEEHIVE STATE

Hello from the Beehive State—Utah

Our year has come to an end and I appreciate the help of everyone in our one association state. IPSLC put on a wonderful 2009 Regional Conference. We had many letters of appreciation from the members for hosting one of the best conferences in a long time. It was a challenge to host but I felt we did an excellent job.

Robin, you and Michael were wonderful to work with and I appreciate everything you have done for our Region.

Due to the lack of work here and funds, I will not be renewing my NAIW membership and will miss everyone I have had the privilege of knowing and working with over the 11 years I have been a member. Take care.

In Fellowship

Patricia J. Goodman, CISR, CPIW, DAE

2008/2009 Utah Council Director, NAIW.

REGION VIII MEMBER OF THE YEAR

We need your assistance. The folder that contains all the past winners of the Region VIII Members of the Year has been lost or misplaced. If you or any of your members knows a past winner of this prestigious award, please let me know her name and the year she won the award. Hopefully we can rebuild this list so the names of the women who helped make this Region great are listed somewhere for the future. We appreciate any assistance you can give us. Either email to gmellen1@msn.com or call Gerry Mellen at 510-483-8156 or mail to Gerry Mellen, 1735 141st Ave., San Leandro, CA 94578. Thanks for helping with this. Gerry

REGION VIII OF NAIW INTERNATIONAL

Regional Vice President:
Robin Fawkes, CCLA CPIW DAE
Assistant to the Regional Vice
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Region VIII Newsletter Editor:
Regina Lemanowicz

Believe in Tomorrow...Educate Today

NOTES FROM THE RVP, CONT'D

It was obvious that the trauma of Hurricane Katrina is still very much in the hearts and souls of the residents there, and the devastation was never far from our minds. I participated in the Community Service neighborhood cleanup project, and it was an extraordinary (hot, sweaty) experience that I'll never forget! I hope this tradition can be continued in the future, because our group really could see the difference we made, and it was hard not to get caught up in the vision of the project leader. One local Region VIII association plans to donate Home Depot gift cards to this charity so they can purchase more tools. Kathleen and Erik Kerstenbeck generously sponsored lunches for the crew—thank you, Kathleen. In addition, a first-ever Walk-a-Thon was held, a highlight being a New Orleans police escort.

The other highlight of National for me was having Region VIII win the Challenge Your Direction contest with the highest percentage of participants. Everyone made a huge effort in response to my appeal, inundating National with completed forms. A special thanks to Nancy Hudson for revving me up with the daily totals as we neared the deadline.

My RVP Assistant Micheal Hawkinson kept me sane throughout the year, and I cannot say enough good things about her. Last week I thanked her boss for sharing Micheal with me this past year, and you should have heard the two of us go on as a mutual admiration society for Micheal.

I wish all the best for Region VIII in the future, and I know Tish will do an outstanding job as your RVP for 09-10. I know that many associations are facing dwindling numbers due to loss of jobs and employer support, with members debating whether they can really afford to continue. For this, I'd like to quote Tish, who says that this is EXACTLY the time when you need to continue your membership in NAIW. The networking and support of your friends will hold you up in difficult times. Just like ALL OF YOU did for me this past year. Thank you with all my heart.

With Warm Regards,

Robin

PS For those who still owe Micheal for their Region VIII dinner or drinks, her email is hawk@HEFFins.com for an address.

COMMENTS FROM REGION VIII 2009 REGIONAL CONFERENCE CWC JUDGES

If the opportunity presents itself, please let all three ladies know that judging was both wonderful, and terrible! Any one of those three women would be an outstanding representative of your region, and each one of them should be incredibly proud of how well they did. Both Ken and I were talking afterward that we would like to have invited each of them to present in our Speech classes as excellent examples of what a good speech looks like. Thanks for the chance to be part of the excitement.

I really had a great time.

Kim Justesen

BTW, I evaluate hundreds of speeches in college classrooms every year, and the three oral presentations from those wonderful speakers at the CWC, were among the best platform skilled speakers I've ever heard. Again, thank you for the honor of being a part of this terrific event.

Ken Hunt

IT WAS A TIME TO SHINE IN 2009



Interview with the RVP

HOW I GOT INTO INSURANCE

AN INTERVIEW WITH BRAD MARSTON, ARM, AIS, CPIM

By Robin Fawkes

Some of you may remember him as Elvis at the Las Vegas regional conference, or on the dance floor in Salt Lake City. But the 08-09 President of IPSLC, like most of us, didn't start out in insurance. The way he ended up in safety and risk management, as a result of a near-death experience, is an amazing story that needs sharing.

Brad initially sold carpets for a living, until a cousin convinced him he'd make more money as an iron-worker. Brad became an apprentice, and worked for a construction company that did maintenance and repairs on gas and oil refineries. One day he was working at a plant in northern Utah, and his company was on a strict timeline because the entire refinery had to be shut down for the maintenance. Brad was working with a partner on a heat exchanger. They were told by the foreman that the heat exchanger was "valved out" so there supposed to be no possibility of gas exposure. The heat exchanger used hydrogen sulfide gas (H₂s) to remove oxygen as part of the refinery process. H₂s is known as the "rotten egg gas" because of its smell, but in high enough concentrations, is odorless. Brad's partner told him, "My eyes are burning", a clue that there was still gas in the exchanger. To secure the leak they needed to put a heavy, hinged lid over it, held by a crane. Brad volunteered to hold his breath, jump up on the scaffolding, and secure it.

Brad was tightening up a bolt when he realized he HAD to take a breath! As soon as he did, his eyes and throat burned, his lungs ached, and he "knew he was going down". His only thought was to get off of the scaffolding and away from the gas. He began wobbling and, astonishingly, the crane operator thought he was joking and laughed! Brad explained that H₂s takes all of the O₂ out of the blood, and the results can be lethal. After about 60 seconds the crane operator realized Brad wasn't joking, and scrambled to pull him out of the area. Now here's the scary part. The company did not want a "reportable incident" to OSHA on their record, so the foreman did not call 911 or take Brad to the hospital, but drove him around in his pickup so the H₂s could dissipate in his body. Only after a lapsed period of time did he take Brad for a medical check.

As a result of this incident, Brad decided to pursue the field of safety training and risk management, beginning with obtaining his EMT certification. He took college courses and eventually obtained a BS degree, leading to a job as a safety manager for a construction company working in process controls. Brad took his transferrable skills into the insurance business, starting his own consulting firm that provides risk management services for companies and agencies



REGION VIII REGIONAL AWARD WINNERS

Rookie of the Year—Karla Dreier-Gligoor, AIS, CISR

Young Professional of the Year— Renee Fazeli, CIC, CISR, CPIW, DAE

Insurance Professional of the Year—Jolene Gilbert, AIS, CISR, DAE, ACSR, CPSR, CPIW

Member of the Year— Francie Stocking, CIC, CRIS, CISR, CPIW

Hall of Fame— Pam Holt, CPIW, DAE

Claims Professional of the Year—Dayna Ann Moran, INS, AIC

Professional Underwriter of the Year—Victoria Rivas, CPCU, AU, CPIW

Risk Management Professional of the Year— Tracy Marston, ARM, CPIW

E.C. Smith, Jr. Memorial Award for Safety - Insurance Professionals of Sacramento

Jeffrey Nordhaus Memorial Award for Education - Honolulu Association of Insurance Professionals

Roy Pasini Memorial Award for Public Relations – Insurance Women of Fresno

Association of the Year Award – Insurance Women of North San Diego County

CWC – Wendy Humphrey – winner

Cindi Cessford – runner up

AAMGA— Martha Loezius, CPCU, CPIW

Region VIII First Timer's Report

Salt Lake City, UT – March 2009

Excitement...Appreciation...Nervousness...Fear...Trepidation. These were just some of the emotions I experienced upon learning that I was the recipient of the 2008 Al Padway Award and that I would be attending the Region VIII Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. Though Annette and Rae Lynn assured me that I'd have a blast, I was still a bit wary. 3-4 days in Salt Lake City with hundreds of women...discussing insurance. Yippee for me.

I am happy to report that my fears were all for naught. I met many wonderful and interesting people who just happened to be women who work in the insurance industry. And the overwhelming display of camaraderie and support from everyone was great to experience firsthand. I felt like I was attending a family reunion for the first time in years and meeting all these long-lost cousins and aunts.

Some memorable moments for me were spending time outside of the conference with my fellow members from the SF Chapter and sister chapters. It gave me the opportunity to discover their non-NAIW personalities. I gained a better understanding and appreciation for the amount of work/energy these dedicated women and men put into running a chapter and coordinating an event of this magnitude.

As much as I enjoyed my First Timer experience, I believe it would have been much better if I had been a more active participant during the conference; e.g. volunteering to serve on one of the committees. There were times when I felt a bit lost as to what was going on and what to do. Annette was great about checking in on me and including me in various activities, though, which definitely helped.

I'm not sure if these ideas would be feasible, but maybe try to have First Timers "shadow" more experienced convention participants (preferably multiple partners) for a few hours at a time during the convention. This will allow the First Timers to be more actively involved and to meet some of the more experienced members. Another suggestion I have is to allow more time during the First/Gold Timers breakfast for members to meet and talk. Out of the allotted hour, I felt like I only got about 5-10 minutes to actually talk to the other members at my table. The rest of the time was spent listening to speeches (~half the time) and running around getting information about people. Don't get me wrong, I thoroughly enjoyed myself and did manage to win a prize for completing the sheet of member factoids. >;)

Overall, I had a great time and look forward to attending future conventions.

~Submitted by Bao-Quyen Trinh, CIC – San Francisco Chapter NAIW