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NAWIC Convention 2009

Phoenix AZ

To all of you who missed Convention, all I can say is you really missed out on an awesome experience. The JW Marriott Desert Ridge Resort was so beautiful. The rooms were spacious even when shared with your Chapter President. (You know how it is... you bring too many clothes and shoes; she brings too many clothes and shoes. But somehow they all fit in the closet with room to spare.)

I arrived Tuesday afternoon to give me time to study for the second half of the CDS certification testing which took place Wednesday afternoon. Hopefully I passed, but I know it can take multiple times as the tests are challenging. I know any certification of any value is difficult. It is in challenge that the value of the certification is realized and the addition of the alphabet soup behind one's name can be displayed with pride. So let's all keep our fingers crossed.

My roommate, our current President, arrived on Wednesday in time to get unpacked and ready for the Welcoming party. There was a strolling Mariachi band, ladies in sombreros, ponchos and fiesta garb. The food was a Mexican buffet and it was very good.

The official opening ceremonies of the convention took place bright and early Thursday morning. Edith Washington was the Keynote Speaker. Her focus was on Turning Points. As women, we are powerful and we empower others. We have the power to change the world. To truly empower, we have to learn more and more about others. She encouraged us to; Accept what we cannot change, Act, not react, take action instead, Adjust quit focusing on our differences. Focus on the positive impact of situations such as the economic change. Re-evaluate, be more affirmative, use more in-house knowledge/ transfer that knowledge. Use more concentrated collaboration, move pass fear based communication. Don't knit-pick at souls, focus on goals. Focus on Respect, Fairness, and Empathy. To say Edith Washington was inspiring would be an understatement.

After a short break, the annual business meeting began with great debate. I understand from those who are long-time attendees of convention that this was an unusual year where the democratic process was truly displayed. Members spoke their minds and rebuttals were given.

Votes took place and requests were given to be discussed at the post convention meeting of the National Board of Directors. There was a sense of ownership and conviction that our Organization go forward in the spirit of those who founded NAWIC, making sure we stay true and diligent. I was honored to have been selected as a delegate from our chapter, to weigh the motions presented, and to have my voted counted. Thank you all for the opportunity.

The Thursday afternoon session ushered in the Professional seminars that would fill the rest of Thursday and Friday as well. For my first seminar, I chose to attend the preview of the new NEF (NAWIC Education Foundation) Certified Booking 101 workshop. I am really excited about this new certification. Our own Linda Young, CIT was instrumental in making this course a reality. The information presented in the workbook is real life topics presented from an entry level perspective that anyone who is in an administrative position would benefit from. I am planning to take the certification test and add CCB (Certified Construction Bookkeeper) to my name as well. I hope you all join me in this exciting new prospect.

From there I sat in on the Leadership training session (Chapter Board Training). Our incoming President, Robyn Fulton Meyer did an excellent job of presenting pitfalls that might arise during a chapter board meeting. We acted out various scenarios in mock board meetings and discussed the proper way to handle the situations within official NAWIC guidelines. Our own Valerie McGuire attending this session with me and commented later to me on how much she learned and how the topic kept reverting back to the National rules and guidelines rather than feelings or improper actions. Valerie mentioned she felt she could take the principles presented and apply them to the other organizational boards she participates on.

Thursday evening found our chapter members meeting up at a local restaurant for a time to unwind and catch up on all we had observed that day.

Friday morning's seminar I attended was on Rosie's Girls. This is a summer program much like our MAGIC Camp but aimed towards middle school aged girls. The projects were geared to the 11-13 age group girls with integration of social and athletic skills as well. The focus was on total self esteem as well as skill building. Gwen Miller attending this seminar with me and we found it quite interesting, although we are not sure yet if it is something we can undertake at this time. There is a start up licensing fee of \$3,000.00 and a yearly fee of \$2,000.00 every year thereafter. Still, all-in-all, I found it to be a worthwhile program to consider for the future.

From there I attended the paperless Construction office presented by Carol Hagen. We have had the privilege of having Carol as a speaker at one of our monthly membership meetings in the past so the information was not entirely new to me. But I find that even though you might think the topic will be a rehash of information you already know, there is always something new to get out of the subject. Carol presented on the concept of document imaging and content management. I know my company Dynalectric is looking at this type of document management in the near

future. It is part of the "Greening" of our industry and is the wave of the future for many of us. Carol mentioned she would like to visit with our chapter again sometime.

The following seminar I attended, Collaborative Team Process was also presented by Carol Hagan. Here we learned about such topics as Lean and Integrated Project Delivery, BIM, and other types of project management being used by General Contractors these days. Again there was an emphasis on the use of paperless processes and a shared risk being infused in these types of project managements. I found it very informative and again I could relate to the subject as I am finding these kinds of project management processes being introduced on some of the jobs I am involved with. I found Carols topics and information to be timely for the construction environment of the future.

Once again I found myself in a seminar offered by Carol Hagan. The topic was one of project Relationship management. I went in thinking this would be a re-hash of the previous seminar. But to my surprise the information was separate and was on communication and compromise, sharing a common goal, and discussed such topics as contract documents and how the relationship between the owner, architect and Contractor is often structured. I came away with a new way of looking at the way projects are structured from the design build, to types of contracts used such as Lump Sum, Cost Plus, Guaranteed maximum Price and Unit price. I reevaluated the inherent shared risks involved in each type of contract and what to consider when entering i to one.

Saturday's seminars were structured around Association meetings and workshops. The first meeting I attended was Called President to President and was an open forum where incoming presidents could ask questions regarding policies and procedures. From there I attended a session on PR and Marketing. I came away with some great ideas on how to get the word out in media and print and promote our Chapter's activities. The final seminar I attended was on the NAWIC Education Foundation and how to use the programs offered by NEF to better our Chapter, Myself and my Community.

The Convention wrapped up with an elegant formal reception and dinner, the Crystal Vision Awards Gala. It was a great time of Fellowship with NAWIC sisters from all over the United States. We even met a sister from South Africa.

I want to thank you all for the opportunity to attend this year's NAWIC Convention. It was a time of learning and friendship, of networking and fellowship. I encourage all of you to consider attending the 2010 NAWIC Convention which is scheduled for Sept. 1-4 in Louisville KY. I guarantee you will be glad you did.

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