

Forum Report April 24 and 25 2009

My Forum experience started Friday April 24th with my Daughter and Son in law, with brand new Wesley (only four days old) driving me to the airport. We picked up President Anita Villani Barnes along the way. It was great to have a traveling partner and since we were rooming together, it made perfect sense to start the whole weekend this way. Our flight into Las Vegas was a little bumpy and since I really do not like to fly, I was happy to land and get to the activities that were awaiting us.

A First Timers Meeting was scheduled for those who had not attended a Forum before and so I went off to that while Anita went to the Presidents' meeting that was scheduled for the same time slot. The meeting was led by Donna Casteneda, who is a 30 year member of NAWIC. While at the First Timers Meeting, I was greeted by Leslie Maisnik who used to be a San Diego Chapter member. She had moved to Hawaii and is now a member of the Honolulu Chapter. She was so excited to see someone there she knew and we were able to reconnect. The Conferences, Forum, APC and Conventions are a perfect time to meet Sisters from other Chapters, to kindle friendships and networks that will serve you through-out your career.

After the meetings, there was a welcoming party out by the pool. It was a "WIGS for NEF" party where we all donned crazy wigs and had fun trying to recognize each other. Our Cabana Boy, Ed Taylor showed up with flowing long hair tucked up under his ball cap. Anita found a way to be a foot taller with a Bride of Frankenstein wig. She said it was really a graying Marge Simpson. Anyway, she was a foot taller. The party had a carnival atmosphere with games made up using construction materials. There was a duct tape toss, fishing for nuts and bolts, a game where they counted how many strokes it took to pound in a nail in a 2x4 board, miniature golf using a sledge hammer, tossing balls into hard hats; you get the picture. There were of course items being raffled off, including a Coach purse, which I did not win. All proceeds went to benefit the NAWIC Education Foundation.

Forum morning began with a breakfast provided by the Hampton Inn and Ways and Means raffles at 7:30AM. Forum was called to order at 8:30 with opening ceremonies and introductions of dignitaries. The Mayor of Las Vegas was there to welcome us all to his city. He talked about the different projects going on that were outside the realm of gaming such as the new Medical Facilities and the New Performing Arts Building, along with other that are striving for LEED certification.

The morning Keynote Speaker was Punam Mather. She spoke on what women need to succeed. More specifically, she spoke about the need to listen to Life Lessons, to learn from them. Give yourself permission to look inside, listen, experience, apologize and accept. It is not about running faster, higher or better, it is about being authentic. The power will be set off when you are honest with yourself and who you are. Release the fear that others will think less of you. Instead, dare to be Authentic, become remarkable. Remove the barriers we construct for ourselves. Dare to be an example to others.

After our Keynote speaker, the business of Forum took place with the adoption of the Forum agenda and Forum rules. The first Credential Report and Memorials for those NAWIC members who had passed from since the last Forum were given. After a break, Forum business continued with the President's report, the Director's report, the Regional Fund report, the Regional Fund Trustee Nominations and the National Elections Caucus.

It may sound like a lot of boring business took place but actually it was quite interesting and an excellent way to learn about our Region 12 and the NAWIC National.

Our next Keynote Speaker was from Themeing Solutions who gave a very interesting talk on the specialty work of creating and installing the visual themes you see at many of the Casinos. In particular the Mohegan Sun Casino was highlighted. They took us through the many steps involved in creating the beautiful canopies that represent trees and leaves which involved the use of thousands of glass beads. The process went from design to engineering, to procurement, to fabrication, to installation and finally commissioning.

Lunch was served out on the pool deck and was very good with Cesar salads in sourdough bread bowls and baked potatoes. Dessert was a Lavender Moose with berries. Berry Good!

The meetings continued after lunch our Director, Ellen Colglazier challenged us to look to the future and see our organization not as it is, but as it can be. Our Region 12 is 530 members strong. She encouraged us to engage new members as they enter our organization. Get them involved in committees etc. and retain them. Dare to be Remarkable. Nancy Eaton spoke about NEF and all the educational programs that are offered through them. I was especially interested in the Bookkeeping 101 certification that is being developed and is scheduled to be offered in September.

The National Candidates were presented to us. Those in attendance were given an opportunity to speak. The importance of voting, whether there is one or more candidates per position was emphasized.

Other new business brought before Forum addressed the SOX requirements that have been put in place, including the Code of Ethics, Conflict of Interest statement, Document destruction, and Expense re-imbusement to name a few.

The new membership classifications were explained. National Dues increase was discussed. An Invitation to Convention in Phoenix was given. Some of the classes being offered at Convention will be Sexual Harassment, OSHA 10 certification and the 11th hour bid, Record Retention – SOX, LEED, ADA Compliance, and Best Manage Projects.

Nancy Eaton led us in a group activity where Best Practices were shared. Each person was able to say what was the best practice used in their Chapter and by their company. The purpose was to share ideas for the betterment of all. One excellent idea shared was to have a business card made with the local Chapter's website on it and other NAWIC

information, and to include this card every time a personal business card is given. In this way, the news of NAWIC is spread.

Another Keynote Speaker, Doug Beckley, presented on Working Intentionally. Focus on the sphere of influence not on the areas of concern that are out of our control. Stop dwelling on what you can't control. Think deeply about your purpose, create an intelligent plan and work on that plan every day.

Our final Speaker was Kenneth W. Karren on the Grand Canyon Skywalk. This was quite interesting on the construction of the skywalk and the challenges that were faced in building it.

Announcements and Resolutions were given and the business of Forum was concluded.

We met back up around 6:30 PM for a formal reception and banquet. It was fabulous to see all the ladies (and gentlemen) in their finery. Ed Taylor was quite the contrast from the night before as he showed up in a Tuxedo. Glamour and Sparkle and Glitz were everywhere. Dinner was elegant with red lighting featured and entertainment was by the Doug Steel Group who were voice impersonators (what else would you expect in Vegas).

After a long day, we were finally adjourned by National NAWIC President, Pat McDonald.

Sunday morning found us up bright and early for our return trip to San Diego. Anita and I found our time in the Airport, while waiting for our flight, an excellent time to visit and talk about our Chapter and all we envision for it. We had a great seat mate for the flight who turned out to be an entertainer for organizations such as ours. We got his card and will keep him in mind for future events our Chapter might hold.

My Daughter, Son in law, Wesley now 6 days old (am I a proud Grandma or what?) and his big Sister, Audra, 4 ½ met us at the Airport and took us home.

As a fellow NAWIC Sister and your Chapter Vice President, I encourage each and every one of you to take the opportunity to attend one of the Regional events that are held. They are there for your benefit and I am sure you will find, as I did, there is so much to be gained by attending. There are motivational speakers, there are educational classes, there is Regional and National information to be garnered, and finally there are friends to meet and connect with.

Thanks for letting me share my experience with you. I hope you are inspired to step out and join us at the next event. This is OUR Organization and it takes all of us to make it a success.

Lorelee Langworthy, CIT
NAWIC San Diego Chapter 21 Vice President.