From Your 2012 Chairman of the Board

Happy New Year! At midnight January 1, 2012, the 2011 Chairman of the Board Bill Kitchen, CM, officially “handed me the wand” to take over as 2012 Chairman of the Board. But the burning question was: is the handover at midnight EST (where I live) or midnight PST (where Bill lives)? We compromised and agreed that NMA would be covered by two Chairmen of the Board for three hours on January 1, 2012!

This past weekend (January 19-20) marked my first Board of Directors meeting as Chairman. Now that it is behind me, I will tell you a little about myself, recap 2011 accomplishments and challenges, and highlight objectives for 2012.

I have been a member of NMA since 1986 (now before you say “old-timer” and shut down, give me a chance, because I am still 25 in my mind)! I worked on the Space Shuttle program for 32 years, but it didn’t take a “palm reader” to know what was in my future there, so last year I accepted a position with Siemens Global Shared Services as a Process Improvement Specialist/Quality Champion. I loved the space program, but I also love being in the private sector and helping to improve processes which will ultimately have an impact on the US economy! I am married to my wonderful husband Dennis Wesbecker who is an avid cheerleader of my involvement with NMA. Between us we have 2 children (Tonya and Dustin), and 2 grand-children, Sophia and Grayson, who are our pride and joy!

So let’s reflect on 2011. It was a challenging year – first we had the end of the Shuttle Program, which affected many of our chapters in the government sector (USALA, Boeing and Lockheed-Martin), not to mention the economic downturn which was felt by all of our chapters. All of this affected the NMA membership. Overall we saw a negative membership of 2,214 members, however this can be attributed largely to the disaffiliation of the United Space Alliance Chapter in Houston (633), TX and the Gulfstream Chapter in Savannah (374), GA, as well as major reductions due to cutbacks in the space-related industries. But on the positive side we had 1,144 members join the organization over the past year, largely in companies that are not dependent on government contracts; this is a good sign!

In spite of the membership decline, thanks to the leadership of Chairman of the Board Bill Kitchen, CM, Treasurer Steve Menke, CM, and the NMA staff, the Association took appropriate action in response to the economic events and managed to end 2011 in the black with a net income over expenses of $58,087.81. Additionally, focusing on creating value for our members, we developed a partnership with Ivy Exec Online Job Search Professionals. Founded in 2006 to address the career needs of top performers, Ivy Exec was recently recognized on CNBC and voted Top Emerging Company in America. Furthermore, we have entered into partnerships with Mindedge and IQ Share to offer our members reduced prices for PMP® (Project Management Professional) prep courses (on line-self paced, on line instructor-led, or in person instructor led), as well as the introduction of the NMA Virtual Library -- THE digital library designed to provide easy access to a virtual plethora of free resources to enhance your personal, professional, and organizational development.

So what about 2012? During the Board meeting we developed and approved the new 2012 – 2014 Strategic Plan. The board identified four key areas of strategic response to the challenges presented by our ever changing environment. The four areas are:

Happy Valentine’s Day!
From Your 2012 Chairman of the Board (Cont’d)

1. **Association Sustainability and Growth.** The objective of this response is to “Design and implement an immediate and focused response that will effectively sustain and grow the membership and establish a positive membership trend.” The 2012 goal is to “Reverse the negative trend and sustain current membership level.” Baseline: 14,507

2. **New Partnerships and Products.** The objective of this response is to “Expand the perceived value of NMA sponsored products and services.” The 2012 goal is to assess the perceived value, establish baselines, and set the three year performance goals for the following metrics:
   - Offerings
   - Usage
   - Revenue

3. **Horizontal Integration.** Establish horizontal integration to seamlessly connect all four NMA standing committees, end to end, in order to improve efficiencies and effectively increase the value add of NMA products and offerings. The 2012 goal is to establish and begin executing a master plan of cross functional integration which is incorporated into each standing committee’s goals and objectives.

4. **Diversity and Inclusion.** Establish a diverse and inclusive culture to attract, sustain, and grow membership by:
   - Increasing NMA’s effectiveness in reaching a broad range of external entities.
   - Reaching out to diverse markets
   - Promoting and reinforcing NMA as a diverse organization

The 2012 goal is to promote NMA national events via Linkedin, Facebook, and Twitter, and analyze NMA’s current membership population across a broad spectrum of areas, (race, sex, age, culture, geography, industry, education, etc.).

So if 2011 was a sustaining year, then 2012 is a base-lining year; we have to know where we are in order to know where we can go. This will be a very good year, a year of assessing where we are and then setting our sails on course for a brighter future for NMA.
I am not writing about the type of cancer I have, such as malignant tumors; rather, I write about negative relationships that spread destructively throughout the workplace environment. Too easily under stress, each of us have said things we later regret; rather than taking time to make amends with those we have offended, we choose to disregard our infractions thinking time will heal all wounds. This is a poor choice.

Letting bygones be bygones; forgiving and forgetting, may be an attribute of a good leader except when you are the one at fault. Taking the time to admit one’s mistakes to those we have offended not only creates a harmonious workplace but it builds character. During my first week as a new supervisor, I offended two specialists because I held conduct discussions with them before gathering all the facts; more recently, I paraphrased the words of a specialist out of context. With each account I took the time to apologize. Doing so, I have become a better person, contributed to a friendlier workplace, and salvaged friendships that I cherish.

In life’s relationships, both personal and professional, nothing is more important than having a good reputation. Everyone wants one, even the most stubborn among us, but few fully understand what is required to correctly develop a good reputation. As the former President and Chairman of NMA Chapter 565, I learned a good reputation must be founded on being trustworthy, having a self-functioning capacity (a drive to teach oneself), being a clear and positive thinker, being a team player, and being timely.

Looking across my workplace, I see an abundance of good people though some are too proud to reconcile their differences with others, choosing to divide co-workers while alienating others. I know quite well the shortness of life and value of relationships. Take this time to make amends, to build your character, and to contribute to a friendlier workplace that benefits all.

“Leadership: Giving of oneself so that other people’s dreams come true”

Submitted by: City of San Diego Chapter #195

Basketball legend Bill Walton inspired attendees at the City of San Diego Chapter NMA Professional Development and Membership Kick-off Luncheon in October at the City Concourse. Bill Walton, who learned “philosophy” from celebrated coach John Wooden at UCLA (where he was a member of two NCAA championship teams and was thrice awarded NCAA Player of the Year), is very familiar with the significance of strong leadership. Learning from heroes including his parents, Bill Russell, Mohammed Ali, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Bobby Kennedy and others, he defines leadership as “giving of oneself so that other people’s dreams come true.” He discussed Coach Wooden’s Pyramid of Success and many of his maxims (particularly as they applied to himself). Walton overcame physical hardships and shared his lessons in optimism and self-realization. He delivered an entertaining message focusing on life lessons, basketball, television, rock & roll, and exemplified leadership when challenged with limitations. “Bill Walton was an energetic speaker who made you feel his win and appreciate the true champion that he is” says one NMA member at the City of San Diego, Rhonda Ciardetti. Walton’s strategies and decisions included stories of teamwork, perseverance, hard work, and a positive attitude. The outcome to his diligent efforts has been personal growth, bonding relationships and professional success.

For more information about Bill Walton or Coach Wooden click on the following links:

Bill Walton Official website http://billwalton.com/
Coach John Wooden Official website http://www.coachwooden.com/
Bill Walton’s Tribute to Coach Wooden http://billwalton.com/john-wooden
Seldom do you receive the opportunity to participate in a cause that has immediate and lasting effects on the lives of those in need. Such is the case when you volunteer to work with Habitat for Humanity. It is quite rewarding to know that you had a hand, no matter how large or small, in helping to build a home for another individual and his or her family.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and NMA-BCBSM Leadership Development Association, along with other organizations, are partners with Habitat for Humanity. Habitat is not building just a single house, but an entire community on the east side of Detroit. Our chapter was given specific volunteer days on which we could participate, including the kickoff to building the new home.

Julie Sailus, NMA board member and previous VP of Public Relations, began collaborating with Dave Nelson, Vice President and Chief Actuary, in late 2010. James Lang, Vice President of Pharmacy Services joined forces with them as well. The conversations culminated in financial donations from NMA, BCBSM and Blue Care Network, Medco and Walgreen’s Pharmacy. In addition to the monetary donations, Habitat needed bodies to assist with the construction of the house. The kickoff took place on September 12th and a number of people volunteered on both September 24th and October 15th.

On both Saturdays, a group of NMA members showed up at 7:30 a.m. to begin work. Day One attendees were Angela Hollis, James Lang, Elaina Lee, Ray Lewis, Dave Nelson, Julie Sailus, and Matt Zelman. This group worked alongside other volunteers throughout the day and completed a great deal of foundational work.

With assistance from builders from around the country and seasoned volunteers who build houses with Habitat for Humanity regularly, we did everything from sweeping the floors to installing aluminum beneath the roof. The ground was less than perfect due to an earlier rainfall, but everyone continued to work despite the challenging weather conditions. Fortunately, the day turned out to be a sunny day and not too hot.

We worked in pairs on the smaller projects, and as a group to complete major parts of the job. At the end of the day we broke down all the building materials and stored them for the next house. At the end of the day when the soot and mud were gone, a bit of the soreness began to become apparent; however, we all felt a true sense of accomplishment.

We were grateful that our colleagues had completed the outer work so that we could add some of the finishing touches. Day Two consisted of tasks like installing door frames and base moldings. This meant getting comfortable with the Mitre saw, nail gun, and caulking gun! Volunteers on site included: Nancy Bennett, Stacey Brown, Veronique Hughes, Steven Jones, Denise Kolen, Deborah Riley, Tracy Welch and our current chapter president, Alisa Bennett.

Yes, it was a full day of labor intensive work, but it was also very rewarding.

In addition to the volunteers, the future homeowner also assisted with building the place she would one day call home. Some may not realize it, but future owners of Habitat homes do not merely receive a handout. In addition to having to meet certain qualifications that go along with becoming a new homeowner, they must also contribute a certain amount of hours building the house, and invest a certain dollar amount for the home.

Habitat for Humanity is doing a wonderful job for our community and communities throughout the nation. We were glad to have volunteered as part of the BCBSM and NMA team. Future volunteer opportunities will be available and we know we can count on additional support and participation from our chapter members.
Habitat for Humanity Photo-ops!!

NMA BCBSM #141
Detroit, MI

L-R Alisa Bennett and Nancy Bennett

Elaina Lee cutting shingles

Julie Saitus and Dave Nelson

Matt Zelman

L-R Alisa Bennett and Nancy Bennett
On a beautiful sunny weekend in mid-September, nearly two dozen Lockheed Martin employees, friends and family members traveled to Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain, GA, to participate in the 25th annual Bike MS Atlanta Ride. Lockheed Martin has fielded a team in this event every year since 2005, and this year raised nearly $6,000 to help the National Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society move one step closer toward their goal of a world free of MS. The Bike MS Atlanta Ride raises nearly $1 million annually in the fight against MS.

The team’s cyclists rode between 60 and 160 miles through the rolling hills of West Georgia during the two-day event, while three Lockheed Martin volunteers spent many long hours behind the wheel of support vans, helping to keep the course safe and offering assistance to cyclists as needed. When they weren’t riding or driving, team members relaxed at the LMLA-sponsored team tent, grilling hamburgers and hot dogs and enjoying the event’s Mardi Gras themed festivities.

Since its inception as a single ride in Minnesota in 1980, Bike MS has grown to become a series of more than 100 rides all across the nation, annually drawing more than 100,000 cyclists and raising more than $70 million. In the 31-year history of Bike MS, more than $600 million has been raised in the fight against multiple sclerosis.
Lockheed Martin Retirees Association (LMRA) Learn about the TSPLOST Bill

By Leslie Nigh

Lockheed Martin Leadership Association #531 / Marietta, GA

On Tuesday, Nov. 22, LMRA retirees met for breakfast and heard former Cobb Commission Chairman, Bill Byrne, speak to the group about the upcoming Transportation Special Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST) bill. Mr. Byrne explained that House Bill 277, the Transportation Investment Act of 2010, passed by the Georgia Legislature, created 12 regional tax districts. These tax districts are authorized to develop transportation improvements in their region that would be paid for by a 1% sales tax, voted on and passed by the voters in that region. Additionally, the bill eliminates local control by creating a board of 21 people in each region with oversight on where the money is spent. There are nine other counties in the region that Cobb County is in. The list of projects in the current TSPLOST heavily favors Fulton and Dekalb counties and provides very little for Cobb. However, even if Cobb voters reject the TSPLOST the majority of the other counties could pass it and we will still pay the extra one cent tax. Mr. Byrne encouraged us to pressure our county commission chairman and other Cobb representatives on this board to ensure Cobb gets an equal share of the funds raised, or vote against the TSPLOST in the next election.
For the third year in a row, ICPM will offer Administrative Management Society Foundation (AMS-Foundation) Scholarships for CM certification. AMS was the founding sponsor of the Certified Administrative Manager (C.A.M.) certification, an advanced level certification for administrative managers, which ICPM acquired in 1995. Upon termination of AMS in 2002, the AMS-Foundation continued operations until 2007, at which time it donated funds to ICPM to create a legacy to AMS to support management and leadership development through the funding of scholarships.

2012 AMS-Foundation Scholarship submissions will be accepted February 1 thru 28th and scholarships awards will be announced by March 15 2012.

Each AMS-Foundation scholarship award will be made in the amount of $445 (US dollars) and will partially offset the cost of the CM bundle. The remaining balance will be paid by the scholarship recipient at the time the scholarship award is made. Any additional costs of certification (such as exam retake or application renewal fees) will be the responsibility of the scholarship recipient.

Eligibility criteria to apply for an AMS-Foundation Scholarship include the following:

- Be a first time applicant to the CM certification purchasing the CM bundle,
- Meet the eligibility requirements for education and experience for CM certification,
- Be able to complete the 3 CM certification exams within 15 months, and
- Be able to fund the remaining cost of certification upon receipt of a scholarship award.

To apply for an AMS-Foundation Scholarship:

1. Create an account on the ICPM site and submit the CM Application form online with all required documentation.
2. Submit the documents listed below to ICPM by fax (540-801-8650) or email (icpcmcm@jmu.edu) by February 28, 2012.
   - 2 letters of business/professional support for a scholarship award.
   - An essay of 300 or fewer words, double spaced, on why you want to become a Certified Manager.

Scholarship submissions will be reviewed and selected by committee. Awards are made based on merit. Questions can be addressed to Melody Branner at 800-568-4120 or by email at icpcmcm@jmu.edu.

The ultimate measure of man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
The Harbor-UCLA Medical Center NMA chapter held their annual Holiday event on December 6, 2011. The well-attended event featured an excellent buffet luncheon of finger food, the chapter’s 2nd annual dessert contest, and the chapter’s usual raucous white elephant gift exchange with spirited stealing of gifts. To share the holiday spirit, guests were invited to bring canned goods, as well as bring an unwrapped gift for a male or female adult patient. Everyone bringing a gift received a ticket for the opportunity drawing - the prize was a heart scan generously donated by the cardiology department. The table of donations was groaning with packages, as Bernice Hill-Shepherd can attest.

Susan Butler, chapter president, conducted the gift exchange with her usual aplomb. You could barely see Susan over the stack of packages.

The dessert contest was another successful event. As a judge, I was hard put to decide what I liked the best. Five contestants brought chocolate treats, one brought a key lime pie. Congratulations to the winners: Kawajalen Mervin’s Key Lime Pie took 1st place and a $50 award, and Barbara Parenti’s Snowball Brownies placed 2nd with a $25 award. Judging all these desserts were Avis French (NMA Associate Director), Stewart Laidlaw, and Bernice Hill-Shepherd. Other dessert contributors were Lisa Bonner, RN with her Dark Chocolate Covered Cherry Christmas Cookies, Kevin Crawford’s Chocolate Mousse with raspberries and mint, Chocolate Banana Cream Trifle presented by Dawn Flores, and Barbara Lee with her Star of David Christmas Tree. After the judging, all the treats were available for the audience to taste.

The opportunity drawing prize heart scan, a prize in high demand, was won by Mack Oliver.

Visions of Sugarplums
By Avis French / 1995 NMA Member of the Year
Mission Viejo, CA

Table of desserts
Bernice Hill-Shepherd presiding over the donation table
Avis, Stewart, Bernice
Kawajalen Mervin 1st place, Susan Butler (chapter president), Barbara Parenti 2nd place
Susan Butler presiding over the gift exchange table
The Lockheed Martin Leadership Association Toastmasters in Flight (TMIF) meeting was held Wednesday, Nov. 30, in the B-95 Conference Center. Shan Cooper, vice president and general manager, took time out from her busy schedule and delivered a speech from Project 10, in the Competent Communicator Toastmasters manual to “Inspire the Audience.” Kianna Hawkins delivered her first Toastmasters speech, “The Icebreaker” as title by Toastmasters. Her speech, entitled “Who I am”, gave the audience a chance to learn a bit about Kianna. The theme of the meeting was “Speaking for the Holidays.” Various attendees shared their memorable holiday moments. The Toastmaster for the day was president, Donnie Carnes, Catherine Bell was Table Topics Master, Crystal Lawrence and Andrea Jones-Durr evaluated the speeches. Toastmasters in Flight meetings are held every Wednesday and guests are welcome at any time.

Leadership Quote

A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don’t necessarily want to go, but ought to be.

- Rosalynn Carter
Most businesses spend more time and energy trying to find new customers than retaining and making their current ones happy. The logic behind customer retention management (CRM) is simple -- It costs far less money to keep customers happy than to spend much more money replacing the unhappy ones with new customers. If you take care of your customers they tell their friends about your business and will in the long run end up spending more money. It is not rocket science. Let me provide you an example of what I am talking about.

I dread eating at airports. If you travel as much as I do, you are probably familiar with the "Three G’s" as it applies to airport fare—Grumpy, Grouchy and Gross.

Recently, I had an early flight to catch at the Ontario, California airport. I found myself standing outside the closed and gated doorway to an Applebee’s restaurant ten minutes before opening time. I just knew they would be late opening the doors and I expected to receive the usual grumpy service common at most airports. I was wrong!

Bam! The clock struck five, the lights popped on and this charming and professional person opened the doors. She greeted me with a smile, a warm “hello” and told me to sit anywhere I wanted. I never had seen such a positive attitude at 5:00 in the morning.

As I enjoyed my meal, I watched her cheerfully greet customers, many of which she called by their first name. They were the “regulars” she said. Felicia was the remarkable person who made that small restaurant pleasant and memorable. Next time I return to the Ontario Airport, I guarantee you this is the place I will go to first.

Here are seven steps to build customer loyalty.

1. Select the right people. In the book, From Good to Great, Jim Collins said, “People are not your most important asset, the RIGHT people are.” Most businesses do a miserable job hiring people. They hire just anyone, provide little or no training and place them on the front-line with customers. Spend more time recruiting and hiring the right people with good personalities. Focus on those who are friendly and demonstrate an interest and enthusiasm for the job.

2. Sensationalize the experience for your customers. Good service is not good enough. A Gallup survey showed a customer who is “emotionally connected” to your place of business is likely to spend 46% more money than a customer who is merely “satisfied” but not emotionally bonded.

3. Set performance standards. Outline the behaviors of how employees should act, speak and respond to customer needs and requests. One of our clients developed twenty customer service commandments outlining the actions and behaviors he wanted his service people to provide to customers.

4. Sustain on-going training and reinforcement. Good customer service skills are not natural for most people. Effective customer service training must be reinforced and taught on a recurring basis. For example, the Ritz-Carlton hotels provide a thorough customer service training program for all of its employees during their orientation. Then each supervisor conducts a daily “line-up” to review one of the commandments with his employees ten minutes before each shift.

5. Shower good employees with rewards and recognition. It is hard to find and keep good employees. So do everything in your power to retain and motivate them. Sure, employees want to be paid well, but they also want to be treated with respect and shown appreciation. The frontline supervisor has the greatest impact on motivating and retaining employees.

6. Survey your customers and reduce your defection rate. On average, businesses lose 15-20 percent of their customers each year to their competition. All businesses encounter this, but few do much about it. To improve retention, one client sends out a customer service report card to its top customers every month. This requires an evaluation based on four specific criteria. They tally the results and make sure employees see the scores. This motivates the employees to do a better job.

7. Seek customer complaints with enthusiasm. For every complaint there are at least 10 other customers that visited your business who have the same criticism. A portion of those 10 people just took their business to your competitor. Look at customer complaints as an opportunity for improvement.

Greg Smith’s cutting-edge keynotes, consulting and training programs have helped businesses accelerate organizational performance, reduce turnover, increase sales, hire better people and deliver better customer service. As President and Lead Navigator of Chart Your Course International he has implemented professional development programs for thousands of organizations globally. He has authored nine informative books including his latest book Fired Up! Leading Your Organization to Achieve Exceptional Results. He lives in Conyers, Georgia. Sign up for his free Navigator Newsletter by visiting http://www.ChartCourse.com or call 770-860-9464 or 800-821-2487.
The Lockheed Martin Leadership Association Bay Area Chapter was delighted to have Mr. Norman Augustine present our Fall Dinner Program on 14 October. Mr. Augustine is the retired President, Chief Executive Officer, and Chairman of the Board of Lockheed Martin Corporation. The chapter was able to arrange a surprise by also inviting Dan Tellep to the event. Mr. Tellep is also a retired President, CEO, and Chairman of the Board of Lockheed Martin Corporation. Mr. Tellep and Mr. Augustine were respectively President, CEO, and Chairman of the Board of Lockheed Aircraft Corporation and Martin Marietta Corporation when the two corporations merged in 1994. We were also successful in keeping our special guest a secret from our speaker until Mr. Tellep arrived. The two colleagues had a short reunion and attendees had a wonderful time chatting with both Mr. Augustine and Mr. Tellep during the social hour before dinner.

The two retired executives shared many humorous stories from the merger planning days and even though Dan Tellep was present, Mr. Augustine pledged to not change his side of the story. In fact, the social hour stories were a great introduction into the after dinner presentation.

Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company Vice President of Business Development and Sunnyvale Site Executive Linda Reiners introduced Mr. Augustine, speaking from her experiences in presenting topics to him when he was President.

Mr. Augustine presented a top-level view of the aerospace profession from the time he decided to change his undergraduate major from geology to aerospace engineering until the present. The world has been through dramatic changes during this period. In more recent times following end of the Cold War and the Peace Dividend was at hand, over 700,000 aerospace jobs were lost. Aerospace companies had to re-invent themselves or be part of the merger and acquisition process. As peer prime contractors, both Lockheed and Martin Marietta were often rivals but found they both embraced fair competition and developed the utmost respect for each other.

This respect brought the two companies together in a merger of equals. Mr. Augustine shared several humorous “cloak and dagger” stories from the pre-merger negotiations.

In looking ahead, Mr. Augustine presented his view on the characteristics of leadership and how everyone can be a leader and one day become CEO.

- Get Ahead by not trying to get Ahead
- When Opportunity knocks, Open the Door
- Surround yourself with Smart and Talented People
- Be Lucky. Accept all the Luck you can.

The presentation was enormously well received and the audience rose in a standing ovation. The presentation was videotaped and is available on the Space Systems Company home page to Lockheed Martin employees.
Norm Augustine Lands in the San Francisco Bay Area (Cont'd)

Following the presentation, Chapter President Paul Parsons presented Bay Area Chapter Coins to Mr. Augustine, Ms. Reiners, and Mr. Tellep to commemorate their participation in the Dinner Program. The Chapter Coin is a way of thanking those who support the LMLA with a visible reminder of their effort. Obverse is the Chapter Logo and Reverse is the NMA Shield.

Copies of Mr. Augustine’s best known book, Augustine’s Laws were available from publisher AIAA for attendees to purchase and he autographed books into the night. In addition to many accolades and achievements, Mr. Augustine is the 2004 recipient of the NMA Wilbur M. McFeely Award.

Patty Hall and Our Zoo!

By Gene Barnett / Pleasure Island Leadership Association #586 / Gulf Shores, AL

Our most recent NMA meeting featured Patty Hall, the passionate director of the Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo. How inspiring it was to listen to her speak about how adversity had made both herself and the other zoo employees better and stronger and more determined to not only keep the zoo alive, but to improve it! This story of strength through adversity is a great life-lesson for us all. Through one strong leader who had a glimmer of hope that she shared through her actions, she created a culture of strength and vision that continues to grow within, and outside of her organization!
Chapter Mixers — a HIT with Members and Executives Alike!

Steve Bailey, CM / NMA President
Dayton, OH

No agenda…no speeches…no reports…just mix, mingle, and munch! That describes the newest and very popular chapter activity at our Blue Cross Blue Shield chapter in Detroit.

Attendees at last year’s Leadership Development Conference (LDC) in Savannah heard members from Blue Cross Blue Shield’s Leadership Development Association (BCBSMLDA) in Detroit talk about a new chapter event that was sparking considerable interest from members, prospective members, and executive management alike. Since then, I’ve kept tabs on it and now, as part of NMA’s 2012 focus on horizontal integration, we wanted to use this issue of NMA Breaktime to begin sharing more exciting best practices from within our ranks!

For three hours every other month (from 5pm to 8pm) a company executive hosts an employee mixer on behalf of the NMA chapter. It’s totally a social meeting, held immediately after work, sometimes on site and sometimes off site. A networking opportunity open to members and non-members…these social mixers also double as recruiting/membership drive events. According to NMA National Secretary Nancy Bennett, “These mixers are very popular and the executives enjoy them as much as our members. Some execs have even made this a friendly competition of whose mixer is the highest attended! It has gotten them involved far more than anyone anticipated!”

Chapter President Alisa Bennett (no “real” relation to Nancy, but they have a lot of fun with both of them having the same last name) writes, “The executive involvement has been phenomenal this year and it means the world to our members and to me personally. We are all stretched thin these days with professional and personal demands, but people are making the time to stay connected through our bi-monthly mixers. People may drop in as they please, and are free to leave as their personal schedules dictate.”

She goes on to say, “Our mixers are win-wins as executives and members, alike, connect with people they don’t get to see on a daily basis – often folks who are holding down the fort at a remote site or just people who work several floors away. The mixers also continue to be a great driver for increasing membership; however, we plan to up the ante in January with a complete mini-membership drive to encourage more participation across the enterprise. We tie our chapter and our mixers into our corporate theme and plan to use the NMA chapter and these mixers to make Unifying Leaders for Change a reality in 2012!”

Chapter leaders report that they earmark a very small portion of their budget for a few appetizers and so far, sponsoring executives have been willing to pick up the tab for a second round of food. As one of them reported to me, “The few dollars we spend for snacks pales by comparison to the return on that investment in terms of camaraderie and awareness of NMA!”

In addition to regular monthly chapter meetings, and other chapter activities and events, these BCBSMLDA mixers are all part of making “NMA…THE Place to BE in The D!!!” Keep up the good work!

Leadership Quote

“Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.”

-Robert F. Kennedy
SCAC Celebrates 2011
By Avis French / 1995 NMA Member of the Year
Mission Viejo, CA

The Southern California Area Council of the NMA, otherwise known as SCAC, held their annual December meeting in 2011 at El Torito Restaurant in Anaheim. It is the one meeting of the year when all the council members and invited guests meet face to face. Attending the event were current and past members of SCAC: Theresa De Leon (president), Cindy Tran (1st VP), Jim Gonzalez (2nd VP), Dave Andersen (VP Communications), Avis French (VP Finances), Michelle Echeverria, (VP Fund Raising), Joe Morano (Past President), Pete Kurzhals (Director), and Bob Noel (SCAC National Director/Pacific South Area Chair). Also attending were chapter representatives: Virginia Miscione (City of Orange), Susan Butler (Harbor-UCLA Medical Center President), Dee Thomas (BALC President). Past SCAC members Mike Patricelli, Jerry Blackburn, Bob DeVries, and Dave Dutcher joined the event. Special guests were past NMA national Member of the Year recipients JoYvonne Bragg (2006) and Victor Koman (2009). Long-time SCAC member and current SCAC VP Finances Avis French is also a Member of the Year recipient, all the way back in 1995.

As usual, the meeting celebrates several events. SCAC celebrated the end of the 2011 year and celebrated the beginning of the 2012 year by de-installing current SCAC officers and installing incoming SCAC officers. Bob Noel, NMA National Director for SCAC, performed the ceremonies. The group shared the spirit of the holiday season by donating gifts to all of the more-than-40 children at La Casita, a shelter for women and their children. Also, everyone participated in a spirited holiday gift exchange, and “stealing” was vigorous. The tables displaying the gifts for La Casita and the packages for the gift exchange were groaning from the weight!

Everyone had such a good time that they want to return to El Torito in 2012. That event will be only one of the successful activities that SCAC members are anticipating in 2012.
Member Spotlight

Julie Sailus
From NMA Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Leadership Development Association

NMA-BCBSM Leadership Development Association, Chapter# 141 would like to nationally recognize our chapter’s 2011 Member of the Year, Julie Sailus. She has been an active member of our chapter for over 5 years, and is now a current member of the chapter’s board of directors. In Julie’s five years with the chapter she served in numerous roles, but her performance always exceeded expectations, winning her the title of Member of the Year and garnering high praise from non-members who have been converted to members!

As referenced in another article in this issue of NMA Breaktime, Julie initiated monthly mixers to recruit new members and re-engage existing members who were dormant. Julie encouraged company executives to participate and "host" those mixers to create alignment and comraderie.

Julie led an initiative to join our NMA chapter’s forces with Habitat for Humanity, organizing volunteers to help Habitat for Humanity’s mission in eliminating substandard housing, by helping to build houses that were simple, decent, and affordable to low-income families (www.habitat.org/).

Julie Sailus managed the most committees when she was our chapter’s Vice President of Public Relations. Julie infused energy and vibrancy into every meeting she attended and lead by example when it came to networking. All of these efforts have won her the respect of her peers, and she is now part of the board of directors for our chapter.

Julie, communicates with peers and executives alike with a tremendous ease and effervescent warmth. Motivated by achieving results for the chapter rather than self-promotion or gratification, Julie delivered on every task whether in or out of scope for her committees. Her energy is boundless and she does it without minimizing the contribution of others. For these reasons we want to nationally recognize our chapter’s Member of the Year, Julie Sailus.
NMA...THE Leadership Development Organization

Full information on NMA’s Website: www.nma1.org

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Make hotel reservations early!