



Flash

103rd International Educational
Conference

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2016 Buffalo Awards –And the Winners Are Tracy Hull (OH)

This year there was a slightly different format with all awards including President Awards, Most Improved, and #1 Chapter presented at the Awards Brunch.

A brief summary included the President's Award recipients: Communication Chair Jenny Yarian – Scapelli, Chapter Development Chair Sharon Mike, IAWP Administrative Office Staff, Conference Chair George Barthalow, Conference Program Chair Richard Vitkay, Conference Program Co Chair Nancy Crosby, Local Arrangements Chair Linda Chapman, and Local Arrangements Co Chair Carolyn Bright.

The 2015 Public Policy Award recipient was presented to Patty Murray, Washington State; the Individual Citation Award recipient was presented to Lisa Maxim, Oregon Aero; the Group Citation Award was presented to ICD Coatings, Washington; the Award of Merit was presented to Fabian Valencia, California; the Group of Merit award was presented to Columbus Career Center, Georgia Department of Labor; the Individual Workforce System Customer Service Award was presented to Kermit Redd, California; the Group Workforce System Customer Service Award was presented to Oceanside Veterans Team; the Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Kathy Bilanko, Washington; the Retiree Award was presented to Michael Mrvichin, New Jersey; the Education Award was presented to California; the Communication Award and the Recognition Award both were presented to California; the Marketing Award was presented to Washington; and the Chapter Development Award was presented to New Jersey.

The Silver Keys, Bronze Keys, and Keeper Korp were distributed through the chapter packets and the winners were asked to stand for recognition. The Bronze Key recipient winners were presented to: Denis Dobine, California; Verletta "Val" Moeller, California; Rebekah Cyr, California; and Linda DeMore, Illinois.

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The Keeper Korps recipient winners were: Joseph Allen, California, and Linda DeMore, Illinois. There were no recipients for the Gold Key Award or the Silver Key Award for 2015.

New Member Award recipients from large, medium and small chapters were presented to: California (large); Texas (medium), and District of Columbia (small).

There were 21 chapters recognized for Membership Retention presented to: California, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Washington, and Wisconsin.

The #1 Chapter Award was presented to California; the Most Improved chapter was presented to Illinois; the High Five Award recipients were presented to: California, Illinois, Oregon, Texas, Washington, and New Jersey.

The first Lifetime Memberships were presented to Mike Mrvichin of the New Jersey Chapter and to the International President, James Thomas.

The 2016 Buffalo Awards Ceremony concluded with presenting Ealton Nelson International Development Awards. The First Award was presented to District Director 11, Che Shang Huang of the Republic of China and the Second Award was presented to Ia-Uen Chen of the Republic of China.

For full details about the achievements of the winners please refer to the Workforce Professional newsletter.



103rd IAWP Awards Brunch Idol Contest Val Moeller (CA)

It's been many years since we had more than a few Idol contest participants. But this year we had five contestants – Judson Wallis (NY); Val Moeller (CA); Rhonda Mahone (IL); Amber 'DIVA' Drake (OR); and for the first time since I have been attending International Educational Conferences (22 years) we had an International Delegate Jason Huang (Republic of China) compete. An outstanding job was done by all! A total of \$945 was raised for the International Delegate fund. And the winner was Jason!

It was a pleasure to participate (I took a chance) and I encourage anyone that is willing to give it a try. I enjoyed it and had fun!



Workforce Trends Steve Corwin (OR)

John Slenker, New York State Department of Labor, has 25 years of statistics and economics experience and has a good knack for explaining the numbers in a way that non-technical staff can understand. He said it is helpful to open your eyes and look at what is happening around you to see the economic effects that produce the numbers. For instance, the aging baby boomers are moving through the population charts like a pig swallowed by an anaconda. Should it really be a surprise that labor force participation is declining when you can see the effect that this group has had all the way through the statistical charts? They are old enough now so many are retiring. The single indicator data that the news media and pundits get all excited about are some of the most un-useful as standalone stats. Looking at groups of indicators is much more instructive about what is happening within the economy. Much of the data is fairly static from month to month and patterns are very predictable in most data sets. The tax information plus US Census data can produce powerful information like longitudinal studies of the age of workers by occupation or industry. With data like that, the churn (turnover) caused by people leaving work can be used to predict future trends.

Staffing Patterns data combined with the database of Potential Employers, which the federal Employment and Training Administration produces for all the states, can be used by local office staff to target job listing recruitment efforts to match who is or will be coming in to claim unemployment benefits. Three year studies of QCEW data regarding hires, separations and those who remain at work in the same jobs can be used to predict or document when a recession starts. When times are good these three counts are roughly 35%, 35%, and 30% respectively. When a recession is in the works, the last statistic changes to 60%, because people do not want to risk changing jobs and will do all they can to retain the job they have.

John's presentation was lively, detailed, and relatively easy to understand for the "lay" people in the audience who are not statisticians or economists. John was able to translate what can be pretty dry numbers to life, so we could relate to the human dynamics at play in the economy. Well done!

Protect Your Credit James Thomas (CA)

We had the advantage of two experts providing information on credit reporting as part of a powerful presentation. The speakers were Melody Marchese and Karyn Hausknecht. Information from credit reporting agencies is an important factor in securing homes, cars, and even work. They provide useful facts to ensure your credit score stays secure and safe.

On your credit report are: name, social security number, address, employment history, date of birth. Some factors that are not on your report area: bank account, salary, race, gender, religion, driving history and medical history. Your report is free if. You have recently been denied credit or you have recently been denied employment or insurance and you suspect someone has used your social security number. Every person in the United States is able to receive 1 free credit report every 12 months from each credit reporting bureau. They gave us three ways to receive the free report which are: 1) Go to the Web Site www.annualcreditreport.com, 2) Call 877-322-8228, 3) Write to Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, GA. 30348.

They also gave us information on how the credit is calculated. Some of the factors are: payment history, amounts owed, length of credit history, new credits and types of credit. They gave us critical help in having incorrect information removed from your credit report: 1) Send a dispute letter, but must be sent to all 3 reporting agencies; 2) The credit reporting agencies are required to perform an investigation within 30 days; or 3) email the request at <http://debt-n-credit-letters.com/>. The most important thing to remember is keep a close eye on your credit because it is your future.



New York Chapter Night - Goat Island Niagara Falls Linda Chapman (NY)

WOW! All I can say about last night is that it was BIG. One of our candidates this year is running a campaign using a slogan about 3 letters makes a difference; well, I will have to borrow from her slogan, because Nancy Crosby and Carolyn Bright had me speechless, which is a difficult feat, all I could say was that three letter word "WOW."

When Nancy met up with Maxine Johnson and I we were on the elevated observation deck and the expressions on the faces of all the attendees down by the falls was one of excitement and "AWE." I don't know about everyone else but for me it was like revisiting my childhood, except this time as an adult and I recognized I was standing square in the middle of paradise. The mist was beautiful and it seemed the water moved in reverse and rose from the river up the falls.

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We were positioned someplace near the base of the Rainbow bridge and the people present in my moment represented that Rainbow in my mind; in that moment I felt we were actualizing the American dream and living the truths of Life, Liberty and Justice for all.

We stood above the river that separated NY from Canada. People from all around the world gathered to take pictures of the magnificent view of the Niagara. Incoming NYS Chapter President Maxine Johnson remarked about the power in the current leading up to the falls, about the way the water pushed and made its way toward the fall and how she salutes all those who actually brave the rapids and do white water rafting. Again, this was a "WOW" moment for me, as I considered we in IAWP have been braving the rapids, sometimes even without a boat, but once we reach the "fall" we are lifted up, reinvigorated and ready to rejoin the rapids of our IAWP journey. So to all of the New York Chapter, the Conference Committee, Western Sub-chapter and especially Carolyn and Nancy, thank you for a wonderful evening at Niagara Falls.



Understanding the Award Process James Thomas (CA)

The presenter Gerri Jimenez stated that she wanted everyone prepared to offer the best award. Everyone provided input for changes and what was needed to add the personal touch. Here are some tips that may be useful:

- Read Chapter Five of the handbook for directions and helpful hints; Gather all relative information
- Advertise to get people involved; Recognize your people for their hard work; Be timely with the award so not to be qualified
- Make sure the award submissions are tabbed for easier identifications for the judges, except the emails
- Make sure the notebook is large enough for the materials; Make a checklist for the awards criteria; Include a membership list for verification
- Get a second person to review the award submission so that nothing will be missed; Make sure that all documentation are for the correct year
- Be sure the dates are for the award year; Highlight the important information to help identify what you're referring to
- Tell the story of why the nomination should be presented an award

Any questions or suggestions should be sent to: Gerri Jimenez at Gerri.Jimenez@state.nm.us or Sharon Mike at Churchlivin@alanticbb.net.



Credit Counseling Arlene Bautista (CA)

This session was given by Melody Ann Marchese and Karyn Hasknecht of the Belmont Housing Resources for WNY. Each is responsible for counseling first time home buyers, financial counseling, and credit counseling. They are part of a new program called the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood. Together with a job developer, all work together to help parents of Head Start students find jobs and secure affordable housing if needed.

Melody stated many employers now request credit information from potential employees. At this time, however, 11 states limit use of credit information in employment.

The presenters listed identifying information contained in credit reports (such as name, date and social security number) and information that is not listed (such as gender, race, and medical history). Other information contains credit history, the list of inquiries, and information about you in public records, such as judgments, public liens, bankruptcy, or late child report.

The three credit bureaus are Equifax, TransUnion and Experian. Melody emphasized the following important points:

- Credit bureaus do not grant credit they only report information;
- Everyone is allowed one free report from each of the credit bureaus.
- It is very important to monitor the credit report from each credit bureau because not all reported information is the same. A good way is to request a credit report from one bureau now, three months later request another credit report from another bureau and three months after that request the third report from the last bureau.
- Carefully review each report. It is not unusual for incorrect information to appear on these reports such as employment history and prior residence addresses.
- If there is incorrect information, it can be disputed by writing a letter to each of the credit bureaus. It is advised to send it via certified mail so it indicates the date received. A faster and more preferred method is sending the dispute via email: <http://debt-n-credit-letters.com>. After 30 days, a new report will be sent with the disputed information removed **or** a letter will be sent advising the requester why the information will remain in the report.

Useful websites:

www.HUD.gov

www.annualcreditreport.com

www.consumer.ftc.gov

Melody and Karyn delivered their presentation in a way in a simple and concise manner. All attendees found this information extremely useful, many will use it to help their clients back at work.

What Do Businesses Want and Need From Workforce Professional Mary Navarro-Aldana, CA

Mikell Fryer from Georgia facilitated a focused and frank discussion with representatives from Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Wendel Companies and Square Foot Tradesman, Inc., on what businesses expect from Workforce Professionals as the landscape for recruiting changes.

Present for the discussion was Sandra Budmark from Wendel Companies, who has developed effective talent management methods, grows and hires talent and has built lasting relationships with local colleges and universities, John Cristus from Square Foot Tradesmen, Inc., who has assisted in hiring over 6000 employees in his family run business with Jennie, his wife and payroll accountant with the company, and Penny Nordham from Blue Cross/Blue Shield, who has developed outstanding and effective recruitment activities.

Mikell began with several questions to the panel. Regarding the Department of Labor, the general consensus is that employers would like to see follow-up after the referral from the department representative.

From a past study statistics were provided on the percentage of 11,000 employers that were planning to hire, would keep staff, would let staff go or did not know what the future would bring for their company. Sandra stated her company is filling at least 15 openings now and will hire veterans. John said 80% of construction companies are trying to hire but if they cannot hire the skilled talent they would not hire. Penny says they are always hiring and have hired approximately 600 per year recently and in most area new hires are additions to staff not replacements.

What does an employer need in general? Sandra says there has been a dip in the professional quality of interviewees, in their inappropriate dress, their "fluff" resume, the way they greet (don't shake hands), they text while walking with the interviewer, wear sunglasses to the interview, these are only some of the examples. John says there are no factual details on the resume (too much fluff). He wants to see details and facts on what they have done not what they hope to do. His question to construction applicants is "Tell me what 1/4th and 1/8th equals"? Penny says applicants' expectations are out of line with their education and experience and are quick to ask how quickly they will promote or how many sick leave days they will receive. The applicants do not have a team concept.

Mikell opened it up to the conference attendees for questions. In response to a question on the importance of customer service the response was applicants need to know the concepts so that they can give customers what they need. John says he gives applicants personality tests for the sales personnel in the service trades.

On a question regarding filling out the forms from the Department of Labor our panelists said yes they do fill them out. They also get referrals from the Department of Labor, not on a regular basis but they do receive them. Attendees stated that every state has veterans' representatives and can help with providing qualified referrals for the job openings.

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In response to a question about individuals over 40 years of age John stated that it is not illegal to ask someone's age, however, it can open the door to a discrimination lawsuit. He is concerned with future workers compensation injuries as this really hurts an employer's business. He needs employees that are physically able to perform the demanding duties of the job. Penney says she can easily hire anyone over 40 years of age but they do need computer skills and finds this is a problem. Sandra can readily hire anyone over 40 as so many of them want to work part time and this is what she has available.

Since resumes have changed substantially, what would help an employer would be a fact based resume not the current templates with old statements. They want actual numbers and accomplishments, what they have done. All of the three employers actually look at each resume that is submitted and they don't use a program.

Thank you letters are necessary and need to be heartfelt. That letter is what makes the difference to being hired. All three agreed that a great thank you letter can get you hired. In closing, Mikell shared that we need to communicate openly with employers, ask them what they need and then refer clients that meet those needs. Open communication, being on the same page for the skills needed, is essential for a successful relationship with employers.



The PIPS Raymond Cabrera (CA)

Now some of you forty something would believe this is a singing group, but you would be wrong. Truth be-told most of our PIP's can't hold a note. No, our PIP's are our Past International Presidents and at present time seven PIPS' are present at this conference. Yesterday afternoon we initiated our outgoing current International President, James Thomas, into our fold making it eight PIPs at the conference. Yes, it's an exclusive club that not all past International presidents have chosen to join, but that is the exception rather than the rule. We meet once a year at the conference and initiate a new member. If I say more about the process they will kill me, so let me just say that we have a good time up dating one another of things that have happened since our last meeting and updating ourselves of all that IAWP has done in the past year.

The Grand Dame of the PIPS is Suzanne Guibert (1980-1981) who has the distinguishing honor of being the first to have served as International President back in 1980. Together with Maryann Polaski-Baykal (1988-1989) they make up our historical background team.

Present yesterday were, (in order of service) Suzanne Guibert, NJ (1980-1981), Maryann Polaski-Baykal, NJ (1988-1989), Freddy Jacobs, AR (2000-2001), George Barthalow, FL (2004-2005), Linda D. Barnes, KY (2006-2007), David Slimp, OK (2011-2012), Ray Cabrera, CA (2013-2014), Mikell Fryer, GA (2014-2015) and now added to the distinguished list is James Thomas, CA (2015-2016).

There is a wealth of knowledge among the PIPS and we are all willing to help in any way you might need. If it's concerning I APES, IAWP or PIP information we can help. We each have a different perspective of the organization during our year of service and insights that you wouldn't otherwise get elsewhere. Contact Susanne or Maryanne and they will get you in contact with the right PIP.

The PIPS hope you had a great educational event at this year's conference and hope you will attend again next year in Costa Mesa, California for our 104th Annual International Educational Conference. Maybe the PIPS can practice and sing you a song. "**Miracles**" have happened.

International Delegates Workforce Center Tour By Verna Wade (NC)

One of the activities our international guests look forward to each year is visiting a United States operated Workforce Center. The International Development chair Chris Crawford with the assistance of Carolyn arranged a visit for the delegates and an invitation was extended to other conference attendees as well.

The visit consisted of two centers located in a phenomenal building that houses the Buffalo Employment & Training Center and the Education Opportunity Center. The latter is a partner organization operated by the University of Buffalo that offers training opportunities at the GED

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level as well as Vocational training in the health care field. At the entrance is a common triage area manned by security guards. Upon check-in at the admissions desk, customers check in at a welcome ipad, completing an online application and indicating what service they need. The center features a conference center area available for rent by the community. The building utilizes smart technology and has LCD panels at locations within the building. They have state of the art computer labs and uniquely designed terminals for customer use, lockers and lounge and study areas all equipped with computers. Services provided are free computer access, career exploration tools, classes for ESL Learners, and vocational training. Students are offered small incentives for reporting when they have landed a job.

Buffalo Employment Training Center, the One–Stop employment source, has partners co-located to meet the job seekers every need. They even feature an onsite clothes closet to assist the jobseeker with proper interview attire. They host 3 large job fairs each year with over 800 job seeks and 50 plus employers. The center served over 10,000 jobseekers last year. The purpose of the center is to conveniently bring employment, training and other workforce services to residents and employers and of course all services are free. The first stop is for job seekers to attend an orientation to find out about the various services and customers are directed from this point. They offer GED, basic computer training and various workshops, career and job placement counselors, job listings, ex-offender and veterans services, self-paced tutorials, 33 computers with internet access, 3 computer labs, NYS DOL onsite referral placement services and more. They partner with job placement efforts with entities such as the Educational Opportunity Center, Job Corp, Urban League, Goodwill, the Summer Youth Employment program and server more. The Executive Director did an excellent job in covering how they assist the job seekers and employers in the area.

UI Round Table Discussion Fred Ruibal (CA)

Being from a primary Unemployment Insurance Program in my home state of California I was very eager to attend the UI round table discussion which was facilitated by Nancy Fink, who is from the Maryland Department of Labor. In this discussion, folks from all over the country were able to bring their own experiences from their respective departments to give us a picture of the unemployment insurance experience and how improvements could be made to this experience. There were four main areas that were covered. They were Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Nancy went around the room and had each participant jot down their own ideas with respect to these areas in order to generate a discussion that proved to be very enlightening. Participants could then take these ideas back to their own states with the hope that processes learned could be a force for positive change and/or improvement to their own UI programs.

The group sought answers to such questions as “What could cause a customer to write a letter to the Governor?” “What can I do as a UI representative to provide better customer service?” The group discovered that there was not really one answer to these questions but that several

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possible answers could provide solutions that can make the UI experience a more positive one on both sides of the aisle. With ever changing technology getting folks to change and adjust to the new ways of doing things can definitely pose a challenge as we struggle to assist our customers as they navigate their way through the UI process. Consistency in how we assist our customers was viewed as very important and something that can be definitely improved by more effective communication within our organizations. It was very interesting to see how similar our UI experiences were as we all sought to achieve the same goals of providing a valid service to our customers through assessing our strengths, recognizing our weaknesses, seizing opportunities and countering threats.

Bridging the Skills Gap: Workforce Development Is Everyone's Business

Chuck Alexander (NC)

Wow what a great workshop. The Association for Talent Development (ATD) is a professional membership organization supporting those who develop the knowledge and skills of employees in organizations around the world. The association was previously known as the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD). Our presenters were Kristin Fyfe-Millsand and Cristina Maasucci.

ATD supports talent development by providing trusted content in the form of research, books, web casts, events, and education programs. They host a variety of conferences to include international gatherings such as ours. The focus of this workshop was closing the skills GAP. The information provided stressed that everyone in workforce development has a role in "bridging the skills gap". Cristina and Kristin talked about the skills gap and offered solutions. They discussed the importance of critical problem solving as it related to "bridging the skills gap".

Higher education was promoted as the key component. They encouraged business consultants to work with employers to help them identify and understand possible gaps in their industries and promote development of OJT, intern and apprenticeship (GROW YOUR OWN).

They encouraged business developers to encourage partnerships with workforce developers to tools that meet industry needs such as certificates and certifications. They emphasized the need to encourage employers to make "bridging the skills gap" a priority and to get local technical institutions involved in providing training.

Most important was the need to educate employers on the availability of government programs and incentives to help with the issue. They made it clear that that the issue was communal ...involving parents, coaches, and teachers, at the middle and high school levels...(early intervention).

Finally, Kristen and Cristina encouraged the study of STEM subjects and job marketable certificates and certifications. I personally found this workshop informative and one heck of a reference source when I go out into the community.

The Long and Winding Road to Employee Engagement Steve Corwin (OR)

Commissioner Dale Peinecke, Washington Employment Security Department and President of NASWA, is anything but a long and winding presenter! The title comes from his own admission that he doesn't always get things right and early failures dogged his efforts in Washington when he set about transforming an agency culture that was tanking. But his mantra might be described as fail forward or use any pitfalls to learn and grow better.

Washington Employment Security had a problem when Dale came on board. They had 2800 staff but enough funding to only keep 1350 employed. They were burning through Reed Act money at an unsustainable rate and we all know those are non-replaceable funds. There would be no magical budget bucket refill. Staff morale was burnt toast. First they did some baseline surveying. There is no use mounting a change effort if you cannot measure progress so they needed to know what the numbers were at the start. Staff responses depicted an 80% level of disengagement. The national average is around 70%. This translates to a lot of lost productivity.

To turn things around Washington sought to communicate a clear vision to staff that: 1) there was a bad culture in the workplace but no bad people, 2) that the reclamation process towards greater employee engagement was a long term project, and 3) that we needed to change people or we would have to change the people. Of course, we always want to help people change, to help staff find their cheese as it were in the new paradigms we face at work.

Dale cited Daryl R Connor regarding sponsorship, or "helping people get on the bus." One of Dale's strategies was to paint the picture of a burning platform for staff so they could see the necessity of change. There is no option to keep doing stuff the same way. Another goal is to change the staff focus from self to customers. Yep, we have challenges too but we are being paid to help customers' overcome theirs not wallow in our own. Most important to Dale the final goal is to shift from a culture of command and control to one of collaboration.

We watched a video narrated by Captain David Marquet about his command strategy that is depicted in his very popular book "Turn the Ship Around." The idea is to turn followers into leaders. It is to move authority to make decisions down to the level where people have the most information about the situation instead of running everything to the top for a command decision. In government service staff is used to top down command culture and often abdicate their responsibility for outcomes or service delivery choices as a result. That needed to change if staff were to have the greatest impact for good on their work and the outcomes for customers.

All efforts now are bent towards not giving orders but seeking collaboration by communicating intent. Also to share as much information to create competence, confidence, and clarity for staff about the vision. By moving the authority to make decisions to the lowest appropriate staff level, this reinforces the imperative message that staff matter. This allows organic leaders within the organization regardless of title the opportunity to have control over decisions and to attract followers who can help solve solutions quickly for staff and their customers. This can include cross functional and cross unit/department teams because often problems span the divisions we have created in our work flow. All of this helps staff feel like they have opportunities to learn and grow.

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Dale finished up by showing us the You Tube video from Kid President and Soul Pancake titled “What if Michael Jordan Had Quit?” It was funny and drove the point home for staff not to give up when difficulty and roadblocks confound our work but to soldier on and see change through. We are on a burning platform of stagnant public funding and we have to get creative to achieve more with less. So how is Washington doing so far? The staff response rate had increased from 56% to 77%. Dale admitted that this is a project that does not have an end point or date. It will be a dynamic, ongoing effort.

Ditch the Transaction: How Oregon is Transforming its Workforce System

Steve Corwin (OR)

Presenter Amber Drake, Oregon Workforce Operations Training Coordinator, stated that Oregon is in the middle of a change effort to make sure that services are provided with customers foremost in mind. Oregon wants to be demand driven and customer centric. As workforce professionals when we serve our customers we must first hear their story. Think about what Stephen Covey said about seeking first to understand and then to be understood. Instead of listening to respond, we need to hear the customer’s story. Once we have truly heard the customer then we can start thinking of what solutions or strategies might help them achieve what they want to change in their circumstances.

To this end, when work teams in Oregon convene to discuss policy, processes or programs, they first bring the customer into the room. Team members must think of how the customer might view the situation, those facts that matter most to the job seeker or training requestor or the business recruiter. Solutions need to be tested (or proofed) by those customers and brought back to the team for tweaking. Think of Mary Poppins’ bag of tricks. It is unremarkable and unobtrusive. Our bag of tricks or solutions must be just as low key or in the background during our work with the customer. We need to not dump the whole bag out on the customer but search for that right tool or solution that will address their felt need (what the customer needs and when they need it). Customers don’t want to hear about everything but only those items which might help them achieve their goal.

The felt need of a community is its dreams, its needs. We need to listen and adapt to provide a product they pull from us as workforce professionals not a product we push on them. Another way to state this is to be “demand driven.” The workforce professional should be a consultant seeking to help the customer make the best possible choice. We can do that through giving our customers the best information available and the range of choices that best fit their circumstances. Then the customer can choose what is best for them to meet their goals and their preferences.

Amber did a great job of engaging the audience in bringing their customers into the training room. She then led us in a tandem or shared writing experience to show us how the same story can have different meaning and endings depending upon who we are. This helped us see the “problem” as a different person may perceive them and how others may have solutions that might help but that we would not think of on our own. So being collaborative in our approach yields better outcomes for the customer and everyone else too. Amber did a superb job of putting us into the customer’s shoes during this session.

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The FLASH is published during the conference under the guidance and direction of the communications committee of the association. Items included in the publication do not reflect any official position of the Association.

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Crawford, David Slimp, Ed Gaska, Sher Longworth, Al Snyder

Shuffle off to Buffalo People Scene 4

Another wonderful surprise about our multi-talented ROC delegates, Jason Huang and Ia-Uen (Jennifer) Chen - they can sing! In fact, as a last minute entry into the Idol Contest, Jason won hands down. You go, Jason. Then at California night, Jennifer and Jason sang a duo. Great job! Happy birthday to Stephanie Stevens. The group who headed to Mattie's (a local restaurant recommended by the shuttle bus driver to have the best breakfast in town) to have Soul food included Dawn Guenzi (MT), Lanae Vetsch (MT), Rebecca Stancil (MT), Angelia Johnson (IL), Pamela Bedford (NY), Sabrina Venegar (IL), Rhonda Mahone (IL), Stephanie Workman (NC), and Angelia Bolton (IL). Their recommendation was fried chicken and waffles (mummmmm). Much in evidence, helping out in the executive office area has been Joan Powers (NC). More people seen at the conference were Judy Johnson (WA), Pamela Bedford (NY), Nancy Fink (MD), Cheryl Flynn (WA), Erlinda Guevarra (GA), Judy Jones (NC), Suzanne Nichols (WA), Judson Wallis (NY), Denise Carey (MD), Alseta Gholston (DC), Jim Boney (NJ), Peggy Carrigg (NJ), Marcia Dulin (PA), Marilyn Hill (GA), Karen Karkula (MN), Sharon Mike (MD), Kathryn Parks (PA), Al & Kathy Snyder (ID), Charlene Grafton (OR), Amber Drake (OR), Sandra Sweeney (NH), Judith Bailey and Linda DeMore (IL). Georgia folks seen include Charlene Brinson, Janice Burley-Black, Sherry Maddock, Sabrina West, Janice Mathis, and Linda Sanders. Ohio delegates include Dorothy Fitzgerald, Francetta Hines, Tracy Hull, Frank Stanley, Kerry Coughlin, and Mary Ellen Miller. Congratulations to Retiree of the Year - Michael Mrvichin (NJ). Among those taking the MoondanceCat cruise of Lake Erie were Barbara Cylma (OK), David Slimp (OK), Gwen Harton (OK), Verna Wade (NC), Evelyn Hight-Wood (TX), Charles Alexander (NC), and our international delegates: Jennifer Chen and Jason Huang with his wife, Rita and almost 4 year old son Ryan. If you see Ryan, ask him to sing "Itsy Bitsy Spider," he is almost as good a singer as his dad. California night brought out the dancers, among those tearing up the dance floor were President James Thomas (CA), Ben Ta'keshita (CA) and Medra Rielly (WA), Cheryl Brown (WA), Stephanie Stevens (OR), Amber Drake (OR). Thanks for a great party, California. Looking forward to Costa Mesa.