

The Executive Summary

VOL V NO. 1 APRIL/MAY 1999



A BIMONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE APMP NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA (NCA) CHAPTER

NCA has a new Web site: <http://www.apmp.org/nca>

By Carl Dickson

NCA's new web site is up and goes way beyond the basics. It enables content contributors to directly post files for downloading, provides discussion forums, and provides the functionality to support online special interest groups.

To try out the new site, simply point your browser at the URL above. The new site can have public areas and members-only areas. When members-only areas are added you

would like to start a SIG or provide some content for the site, email cdickson@optym.com for instructions.

This level of interactivity involves functionality that normally would have to be custom developed. A regular web site is a collection of files that have HTML codes inside them that dictate the formatting. Any change to the content must be done by someone who understands HTML. When we first started construction, this is the approach we took, but coordinating the activity of a bunch of people manually editing files quickly started to get out of hand.



The new APMP Web site

Instead of straight HTML, the new site is based on a product developed by OPTYM called TeamSuite. This platform enables files to be uploaded without conversion to HTML and downloaded by others. It also enables content contributors to post announcements and other information without having to know HTML. NCA is the first chapter to try it out. By the time of the National Conference, APMP National will be using the same platform. Soon thereafter, all of the other chapters will be invited to use the platform for their own individual home pages. ■

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will need to login to access them. You will also need to login in order to participate in the online discussion forums. New users can login, choose a password, and create their own accounts. SIG Leaders and other content contributors will have write access and will be able to manage their own forums and areas.

In many ways, this is a brand new site—a container waiting to be filled. We are looking for people to lead SIGs, participate in the forums, and otherwise provide content to the site. The more you participate, the more valuable it will be as a resource. If you

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President's Corner

by Carl Dickson

Last year I started going to NCA's board meetings. Every once in a while I'd ask a really simple, basic question like, "What are we trying to achieve? Why do people join APMP? Now that we're here, what would we like to do?" I realized I was showing off my inexperience and was expecting people to roll their eyes and go back to discussing Important Things. Instead, they made me President.

So now I'm President and I keep asking the same dumb questions: "What activities would our members like us to pursue? What can we do to get people more involved?" My latest question is "Am I the only one with a bunch of questions that I feel stupid to ask?"

I used to feel like that, but figured that Those In The Know had things under control. Since being elected President, I've started to realize that

I'm supposed to be one of Those In The Know. After a moment's amusement at that thought, I started thinking about the things the Board does and what we know about NCA that could easily slip by someone not also on the Board.

So one of the things we've started doing in this newsletter is publishing information about NCA that we sometimes take for granted that people already know. You know—simple stuff, like the contact list. Or the article by NCA Treasurer Lou Robinson discussing our finances that will give you insight into how NCA functions as an organization. We also have descriptions of the new programs and activities the Board has discussed starting. We're even working on a "Frequently Asked Questions" column for future issues.

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People on the Move...

Welcome to a new feature in the newsletter. **People On The Move** is about you. All of us in APMP, particularly here in NCA, participate, at least partly, so that we can stay in touch with our friends in the business. So, it seems that one of the services the newsletter can provide is to help keep us in touch. In this premier issue of this feature the following friends of ours are moving:

1. **Laura Griffith** (Membership Chair for NCA)—Laura very recently gave birth to a healthy baby girl, Hailey.
2. **Eric Gregory** (President of APMP National)—Eric recently left RMS and accepted a position as Director of Proposals with CACI
3. **Ron Romonchuck**—Ron has recently left STG for fresh challenges as an independent consultant.
4. **Lee Andrese** (Program Chair, NCA)—Lee has recently moved to a new opportunity in Baltimore.
5. **Eliana Hassen** (Incoming Program Chair)—taking up the position from Lee Andrese.
6. **Jeff Burkett** (Incoming Advertising Chair)—taking up the position from Dennis Fitzgerald.
7. **Kate Rosengreen** (Incoming Newsletter Editor)—taking up the position from Rich Freeman.

If you or anyone you know has recently changed jobs or been promoted, send the news to Dlennox@orgcomm.com ■

Former CO for the NRO to speak at the May '99 Roundtable

By Lee Andrese

If you really want to know what makes an effective presentation, you have to go to the client instead of other proposal professionals. For our May 19, 1999 roundtable, we bring you Mr. Bob Watts, a former Contracting Officer who has worked with over 85 source selection teams, as our speaker.

Mr. Watts has approximately 20 years experience in federal acquisition, primarily as a Contracting Officer. During the past three years, Mr. Watts was the Director of the NRO's Acquisition Center of Excellence. This organization provided consulting, training and source selection tools and infrastructure to the 3,000 acquisition personnel in the NRO. Mr. Watt's had the opportunity to watch over 85

source selection teams for the government review, and evaluate contractor proposals—many of which were based on oral presentations.

Although we can't download 20 years of Mr. Watts' knowledge in 30 minutes, he has agreed to share his insights into what defines a "good" oral presentation verses an "exceptional" oral presentation. Mr. Watt's mentioned something about war stories too....

So take advantage of 20 years of expertise in the palm of your hand and join us at the May 19, APMP National Capital Chapter Roundtable.

For reservation or location information, contact Glenda Schroeder at gshroeder@advstaff.com.

For speaker verification or information, contact Lee Andrese at landrese@aquent.com. ■

Net Maxims

Modem Times—Maxims for the Internet Age

1. Home is where you hang your @.
2. The E-mail of the species is more deadly than the mail.
3. A journey of a thousand sites begins with a single click.
4. You can't teach a new mouse old clicks.
5. Great groups from little icons grow.
6. Speak softly and carry a cellular phone.
7. C:\ is the root of all directories.
8. Don't put all your hypes in one home page.
9. Pentium wise; pen and paper foolish.
10. The modem is the message.
11. Too many clicks spoil the browse.
12. The geek shall inherit the earth.
13. A chat has nine lives.
14. Don't byte off more than you can view.
15. Fax is stranger than fiction.
16. What boots up must come down.
17. Windows will never cease.
19. Virtual reality is its own reward.
20. Modulation in all things.

Calendar of Events

The purpose of the calendar is to apprise NCA members of upcoming events of interest to proposal professionals.

APRIL	5	NCA Board Meeting	• Topic—NCA Management and Growth	703-883-9112
MAY	3	NCA Board Meeting	• Topic—TBD	703-883-9112
	19	NCA Roundtable	• Keynote Speaker: Mr. Bob Watts Former CO for the NRO	401-332-1833
	25-28	National Conference	• San Diego	909-659-0789
JUNE	2	NCA Board Meeting	• Topic TBD	703-883-9112
JULY	3	NCA Roundtable	• Topic—TBD	401-332-1833

WANTED:

Various persons, more or less professional, known to affiliate with developers of proposals (and other assorted varmints), seeking to further the interests of NCA and their own sordid reputations.

By Carl Dickson

NCA HAS A NUMBER OF INITIATIVES THAT ARE planned. Now all we need are people to implement them. This creates more opportunities for our members to participate. Participation is a great way to advance your professional reputation, build your personal network, and interact with others who understand the demands of our profession.

Each of us participates in NCA with certain goals and benefits in mind. The following programs described are

things NCA would like to do to grow and prosper. Each needs at least one person to take the idea and run with it. If there is something that you think NCA should pursue or a direction it should go, this is your chance to influence NCA by getting involved.

MARKETING: NCA is preparing to print and distribute thousands of brochures to invite people to our roundtables. We need people to design, produce, and distribute the brochures. We hope to distribute some of them internally within companies (for example, to all proposal/project managers/executives) in order to save on postage costs. If you'd like to see NCA doing more outreach and higher attendance to the roundtables, why not lend us a hand?

NEWSLETTER TEAM: The newsletter is too big of a job for just one person. Instead of having a single editor, we'd like to have a small team to edit/proofread articles, seek advertising, and possibly help out with labeling and

President's Corner...

Continued from page 2

You see, I have a hunch. Even though I started off by asking "What are we trying to achieve?" I was pretty sure that most of us already have our own reasons for going to NCA roundtables and interacting with each other. I bet many of us have things

we'd like to see APMP doing. I know what mine are, but I don't necessarily know what yours are. The only real barrier to achieving these goals is knowing where to start and what to do about it.

I have a sneaky suspicion that if people knew how to leverage NCA to achieve those goals, knew who to contact, and knew who would help, they might just be able to achieve a thing or two. And maybe that's why we're here.

So I've started reaching out to everyone who will listen, speaking at meetings, and writing newsletter articles. If I can coax enough of those who want to achieve something through their membership in NCA to tell us what their goals are or to attend a Board meeting, we can work on it together. One of the things on my list of goals, is to make NCA a forum not only for meeting and sharing insights,

but also as a way for us to achieve things we'd like to achieve in this funny industry and career we've chosen for ourselves.

The funny thing about doing things, is that it takes people to do them. So if I've held your attention for this long, make sure you don't forget to check out the article recruiting people to help out with the new programs and activities we'd like to start. And if you'd like to see us do something that's not on that list just let us know. If at this point you're wondering who "us" is, then this is probably a good time to point out that NCA is an all-volunteer organization and you only get out what you put into it. I have no doubt that the interest is there, it's just a matter of getting everyone to work together to make NCA the vehicle for achieving the things that were our original goal in joining it in the first place. ■



Want to be seen by other proposal professionals? See our new advertising rates and special ad sizes for the NCA Executive Summary. Ask for a copy of our Ad Kit.
Contact Jeff Burkett, work phone: 301-210-3600; e-mail: Burk504@erols.com

mailing. We'll still need one person to take the lead and coordinate the activity, but the job will be a lot easier with a team behind you.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP LEADERS:

Would you like to see NCA activities that address particular subjects such as proposal production, technology, business development, commercial proposals, health care proposals, or others? If so, then why not start a Special Interest Group. SIGs will get their own online forum-space for planning and discussing SIG specific business. They'll also be able to meet prior to roundtables, host brown bags, and contribute to our newsletter. As a SIG leader, you'll be responsible for planning SIG activities and recruiting SIG members. If you'd like to see NCA support activity specific to your type of proposal or role in the process, consider starting a SIG. You don't have to be the top industry-expert in an area to be a SIG leader, you just have to be willing to commit some time to rallying others.

BROWN BAGS: In the past NCA has held lunch-time brown bag meetings on various subjects. Once the SIGs start-up we'll have plenty to talk about. However,

someone is needed to schedule and coordinate the events. And the person who coordinates the brown bags will be in the loop on each and every one, gain lots of exposure, and have many opportunities for professional growth.

VENDOR PROGRAM: Some of the ideas discussed for a Vendor Program include special badges for vendors, joint sponsorship of activities such as training, coupons for NCA raffles, maintaining a resource directory, joint mailings, and more. NCA is seeking someone (preferably a corporate member employee who is not a vendor) to take the lead in drafting Vendor Program policies for the Board's consideration and to oversee the program once implemented.

If you would like to see NCA implement these or other initiatives, contact Carl Dickson by email (cdickson@optym.com) or by telephone (703-883-9112). Or better yet, just come to one of NCA's Board Meetings where these issues are discussed and decisions are made. Our next board meeting will be at 6:00pm on Monday May 3, 1999 at the office of OPTYM Professional Services, Inc., 7927 Jones Branch Drive, Suite 500, McLean, Virginia 22102. ■

APMP Membership Application

Our annual membership is \$75. Please complete the application form and submit it along with a check made payable to APMP.

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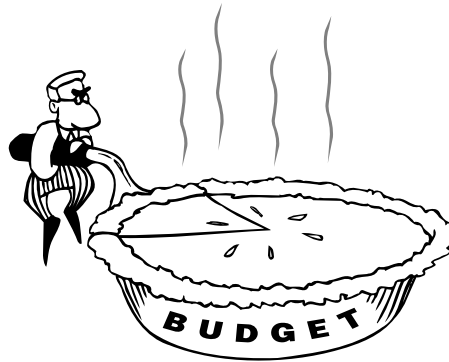
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THE TREASURER'S NOOK

By Lou Robinson

There are three primary NCA functional areas that involve money. These are the roundtable dinners, the newsletter (the Executive Summary) and the NCA chapter rebate of the APMP dues. There are other minor areas such as awards, gifts, interest and bank charges.



ROUNDTABLES — The income is generated from what people pay to attend. This rate is currently \$35 if you pay in advance and \$55 if you pay at the door. About 95% pay in advance and save \$20. However, paying in advance has some risk because no-shows do not get a refund. Speakers and the occasional guests do not pay.

The expenses to host a roundtable event consist of the cost of the meals, the bar fee, the audio-visual rental, the service charge and tax. The service charge is a constant of 18% and it applies to everything. The tax at 4.5% also applies to everything (including the service charge). The cost of each meal depends on the type of food, the location and the number of guaranteed people. At the Holiday Inn, the cost of each meal varies between about \$23 and \$26

(after service charge and tax). At Maggiano's each meal cost \$32. The marked up audio-visual equipment (projector and screen) is \$92.50 and the bar fee is \$61.65.

So, what is the bottom line? In round numbers, we earn about \$10 per meal (at the Holiday Inn) less the cost of the bar, audio-visual and the meals for the speakers. If we have one speaker, these costs are about \$175. These cost increase by about \$25 per speaker. Also, we must pay for at least the number of people we guarantee to the restaurant. This is part of the reason we charge so much less for those who pay in advance. The Holiday Inn is somewhat flexible, but occasionally we have to pay for extra meals. At the March Round-table we had 34 paying people (one was \$55), two speakers and the profit was \$169. Our best round-table (of recent times) was in March 1998 when we had 82 paying people and made a profit of over \$800.

NEWSLETTER (EXECUTIVE SUMMARY) — The newsletter runs at a loss. Income is generated by advertising, but it is less than the cost of printing and mailing.

There has been debate over how much advertising space to offer. We want to keep the newsletter "Content Rich," and we will carry it at a loss as far as we can sustain it because people tell us that the newsletter is of value to them. We want it to have many articles that are of interest to you as well as a few advertisements (two to four in recent issues) that will likely appeal to the newsletter audience. This issue generated \$630 for four advertisements, but typically the advertisement revenue is about \$350 per issue.

There are three areas of cost in getting the paper out—Desktop Publishing (DTP), reproduction and postage/sealing. Four hours of DTP was required for the December newsletter costing \$260. For the

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December issue, the reproduction cost was \$233 for 560 copies. We pay the actual postage plus a dime for each copy to cover handling and sealing. The cost for this service was \$222 for the December issue. The total cost for the December issue was \$715 and this is fairly close to the cost for other issues.

The bottom line is that typically the cost is about \$700 and the income is about \$350. NCA does subsidize the newsletter, but it allows production of a newsletter of which we are all very proud.

NATIONAL APMP DUES REBATE — Most NCA participants belong to APMP National and pay \$75 in annual dues. National APMP returns \$12 of this to the chapters for all affiliated members who are actually active in the chapter. Being affiliated means that NCA was named on the APMP Membership Application as the chapter with which the applicant is affiliated. Being active means attending at least one NCA function per year.

The mailing list (now email based) that we use to keep people informed about NCA-sponsored events is signifi-

cantly larger, with upwards of 400 people, than the list of names that passes the above criteria for dues rebate. Last year there were 90 NCA affiliated APMP members in good standing as of December 31, 1998 who attended at least one NCA event. As a result, the NCA received \$1,080 from APMP (National) in March of 1999.

THE FUTURE — The roundtables generate a profit that comes awfully close to matching the loss run by the newsletter dollar-for-dollar. As a non-profit organization, this is not necessarily a bad thing—any revenue coming in will ultimately be spent on increasing member benefits. To continue to provide those benefits, we must continue to be as fiscally strong as we have in the past. The key to our financial health is to generate higher attendance to the roundtables. We believe that the interaction at roundtables and the sharing of information is the primary reason people are interested in NCA. As a result of this analysis we have begun placing a higher priority on reaching out to new people to attend the roundtables, while simultaneously making it easier for people to participate and “stay” in the loop on NCA activities. ■

Inside Secrets for Winning More Business...

Engineer's and Manager's Guide to Winning Proposals

Donald V. Helgeson

Understanding the proposal process can mean the difference between winning or losing contracts. Now more than ever you need whatever edge you can get in this fiercely competitive arena. This book crystallizes what each part of your proposal will accomplish — providing you with step-by-step instructions that make proposal writing almost as easy as filling in the blanks.

Contents: The Marketing Function — Where It All Begins. Organizational Structures. How Proposals Are Organized. A Systematic Approach for Getting Started. Writing Techniques — The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly. How the Customer Evaluates Your Proposal. Why Some Proposals Don't Make the Grade. Special Applications. What Every Proposal Manager Needs To Know.

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