

CACTUS CALL



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

End of summer greetings! I begin this first column as your SW Chapter President, with a couple of observations about this organization. First, I am one in a series of leaders who have come before me and who will come after me. Our chapter has a rich tradition of service and commitment, and especially continuity. That is one of the hallmarks of a great organization... people willing to step up and make their mark, with the support of all those who have come before them. My thanks to Past-President Bobbie Kirkland for the outstanding job she did in making the 2004 Vegas conference one of the most successful to date. Big shoes to follow.....

Second, although the bulk of our current Board members have several years of service, we are constantly seeking new volunteers to step up and continue the tradition. If you wish to become more involved, I can promise great friendships, numerous challenges, and a satisfaction that comes from volunteering, so please contact me or any of the other Board members to become involved.

Our first event of the new Board year was a great success and loads of fun. We began with a networking chili cook-off in beautiful Park City, Utah. Entertainment included 2 authentic ropin' guys who attempted to give us lessons in the fine art of steer roping. I can only say that it looked very easy! Four famous (infamous) cowboys came to judge the chili cook-off, and not surprisingly had a disagreement about which team should win.

Our Educational Forum the next day included 4 excellent speakers who seemed to motivate and energize the attendees. We had record numbers of attendance for both events, and hope to draw an even bigger group next summer. If you did not attend these events, or if you want to relive fun memories, you will find all sorts of information on our website.

And finally, as a Board we met for 2 days prior to our chapter events to map out next year's conferences. Vegas 2005 is in the planning stages, and promises to be once again a great value in terms of programming excellence and networking opportunities.

I really believe that the Southwest Chapter is a great resource for you, it's members, and urge you all to take advantage by attending our events and volunteering your professional know-how! With your participation we will continue to make this chapter an important force within MRA.

Respectfully,
Cristy Reid
Ruth Nelson Research Services
President, SWMRA

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EDUCATIONAL FORUM

You know that a conference is going well when you see Bobbie Kirkland (SWMRA Past President), flanked by two professional Rodeo Ropers, learning how to lasso a bale of hay (complete with plastic bovine head). For those of you who didn't have a chance to attend the 2004 Educational Forum in Park City, Get Heady at 8,000 Feet, you missed out!

Imagine the most breathtaking, serene mountain valley that you've ever seen. Pause there for a second; breathe in the cool mountain air. Now to complete the experience, drop in a resort and a few wild and crazy MRA members brimming with new ideas and perspectives and you're practically right there with us.

The networking event kicked off with a team chili cook-off where 'secret' ingredients ranged from Mango to Hershey's Chocolate Kisses (names have been deleted to protect the guilty), judged by a panel of re-enactment gunslingers. Several debates, two gun-fights and one bribe later the winners were decided, but we were having too much fun to care who won!

The educational sessions began with an exciting presentation of the FISH Philosophy from Leslie Trottier. This is an excellent video to begin with, and her presentation was very useful to people like myself who have been through the FISH Philosophy. Leslie's enthusiasm and ability to get the group involved not only pushed our interest even higher, but provided a valuable forum for us to share ideas that have worked in our own shops with each other.

I must admit that I went into Terilyn Reber Vaught's (ASKi) session over International Market Research thinking that it wouldn't really impact me as a Supervisor, but I found it enlightening and full of invaluable information. I found myself glued to her PowerPoint presentation, excitedly scribbling notes. The only complaint that I or anyone else seemed to have is that she didn't have enough time!

Kathy Pilhuj's (Scarborough Research) segment provided excellent insight into an area that often gets overlooked as we rush to train our interviewers- Supervisor training! Not only did her presentation provide fantastic information to Managers when training their Supervisors, but as a Supervisor it provided external validation for much of what I already know as well as much needed insight into up-training that will boost my effectiveness as a leader. I left with a new list of goals and a direction to make them happen.

Rounding out the day, and with perfect timing, was Erik Brassell (ISA, Inc) with Getting Serious (about having fun @ work). This was a perfect encore to the FISH Philosophy segment, especially for anyone like me who was saying "Yes! I'm ready to go back and make a difference and have some fun in my shop! What now?" Not only did he provide great foundational information about the importance of having fun at work, he also had some great suggestions.

In closing I want to say first that the SWMRA Board members did a phenomenal job of planning the conference and making it the shining success that it was. I also want to close with a thought: I'm sure we've all heard, on more than one occasion, someone say "You've got to be crazy to do Market Research!" Looking back on my experience in Park City, I think maybe they're right. Maybe we are a little crazy, but you know—that's all right. I think it is that creative, insane spark (which many cultures consider divine) that makes Market Research the living, adapting, FUN industry that it is. And for those that didn't make it to beautiful Park City, don't miss the Vegas conference! If there is anything I've noticed about the SWMRA Board, it's that they're always planning bigger and better things.

No Plastic Cows were harmed during this conference.
Submitted by Chuck Austin, Supervisors - On-Line Communications, Inc.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Our attendee satisfaction survey was conducted with a 5-point scale, with a 5 indicating strong agreement and a 1 indicating strong disagreement. 42 attendees filled out our survey, or a total of 81% of those present.

- Networking Event/Chili Cook-off. 85% of the attendees felt that the chapter should continue to offer these kinds of events.
- Session Evaluations. Speaker attributes were rated using the same 5-point scale. Average session ratings ranged from 3.51 to 4.65. The combined mean ratings for all 4 speakers is shown in Table 1.
- Value of Overall Experience. When asked to rate the conference as a valuable experience, 100% of attendees rated either strong agreement (59.5%) or agreement (40.5%).

Attendees also rated their agreement with other statements (whether or not the learning justified the expense, and if it met their needs, and whether or not the hotel offered good value/service). The percentages of attendees who indicated strong agreement to agreement (top two boxes) with these statements are summarized in table 2.

Thanks to all who attended and all who helped put on our Educational Forum 2004. Brad Larson is already busy scouting locations for next summer's event, and we hope to see more of you next year!

Table 1

Session had a practical application	Mean 4.39
Handouts were useful	Mean 4.26
I learned something at the session	Mean 4.29
Overall, the session was valuable	Mean 4.20

Table 2 - Educational Forum Ratings

What I learned was worth the expense	92.9%
Educational sessions met my needs	81.0%
Hotel rooms were a good value	71.4%
Hotel provided excellent services	78.6%
Plan to attend SWMRA 2005 Vegas Conference	78.6%

SWMRA CHAPTER BOARD

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SOUTHWEST CHAPTER AWARDS FOUR SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 2004

The Southwest Chapter of the Marketing Research Association is pleased to announce the Continuing Education Scholarship Awards for the year 2004.

The program was developed to encourage and assist educational pursuits among the members and employees of members of the Southwest Chapter. Course work eligible for assistance was broad to allow applicants to enhance or develop skills primary as well as ancillary to marketing research.

Education could include such topics as software applications, moderator training, writing techniques and the Principles of Marketing Research, sponsored by the National MRA.

The four 2004 SW Chapter MRA Scholarship Award recipients are:

Richard Cram, Information Alliance, Psychological Research, \$750.00

Steve Larson, Information Alliance, AMA School of Marketing, \$750.00

Carmen Muniz, Galloway Research, Basic Statistics, \$525.00

Chism Nash, Information Alliance, Mass Communications, \$720.00

Information regarding the SW Scholarship Program is available from any SW Board member, Scholarship Committee member or by logging onto our web site at www.swmra.org.

Scholarship Committee Members

Patricia Carr, Electic/Insight

Michael Choffy, Springs Research

Lizabeth Clawson, MRC Group

Nancy Hayslett, On-line Communications, Inc.

GREETINGS FROM MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

I am the new Membership Chair for our Chapter and would like to introduce my committee. Stacy Scott with Dallas Focus, Pam Porter with Murray Hill Research and I greet new members every month, and contact companies that will need to renew their membership.

Through a personal telephone call and a welcome packet of chapter information, our goal is to make each new chapter member feel welcome and included. I'd like to introduce you to our chapter's newest members:

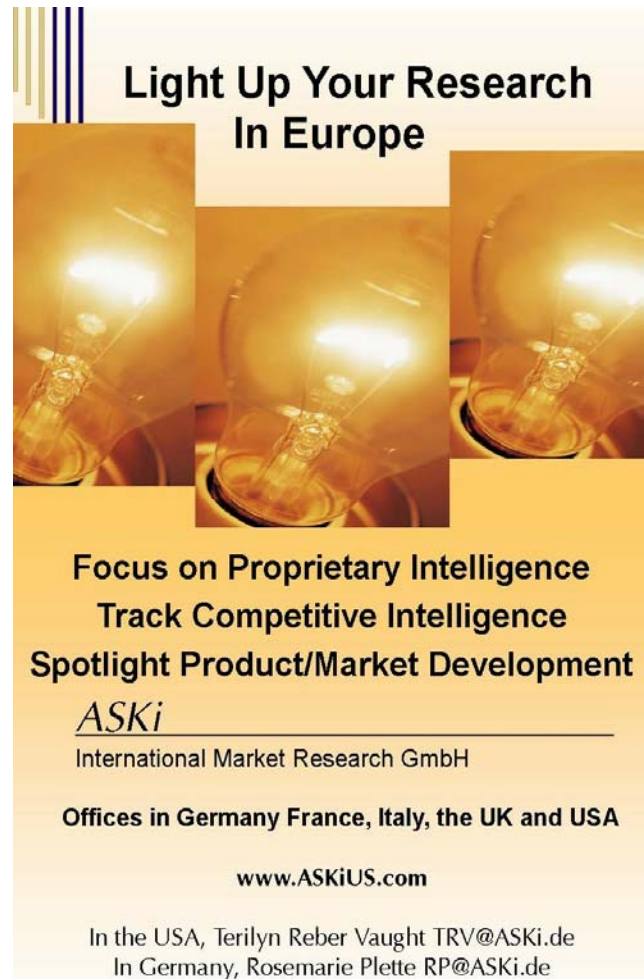
David Kauffman, a student at the University of Nevada Las Vegas.

Sara Timmins who is with Nationwide Surveys.

Kyle Graham and *Kurt Knapton* and several others from their company, which is e-Rewards, Inc.

Please let me know if there are any companies in your cities that we need to contact that might be interested in joining the MRA.

Karen Thomas – Savitz Field and Focus – 13747 Montfort, Suite 122, Dallas, TX 75240



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MARKETING RESEARCH ASSOCIATION SOUTHWEST CHAPTER

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