

**55th WA-AK Division
Annual Meeting & Leadership Conference**

**May 17 - 20, 2007
Redmond WA**

The meeting theme was "Flying High with Technology" and was hosted by the Lake Washington East Chapter. The conference was held at the Redmond Marriot Town Center hotel. The Redmond Town Center opened in August 1997 and the open-air mixed-use center is comprised of 120 acres of unique stores, offices, and entertainment.

I attended two professional development seminars on Friday. The first was presented by Karen Wright - the "Eye of the Storm", finding calm in the chaos of your day-to-day life. See Karen's web site at <http://www.wrightminded.com/>. We did several interactive exercises focused on the importance of communication, organization and open mindedness. I was particularly interested in her presentation about the four stages of change, which she shared from Price Pritchard.

The second seminar was led by Faisal Jaswal and Gabrielle Bennett from Bellevue Community College on "Building & Preparing Your Preferred Future", recognizing and making deliberate choices and decisions. They, too, had us doing some interactive exercises which were also based the importance of communication, organization and open mindedness. Both seminars also touched on Leadership and the qualities that make up a good leader. Our definitions of what constitutes a leader were also broadened.

Friday evening there was a trip to Microsoft, where we were allowed the luxury of shopping at the Microsoft store, a privilege only for Microsoft employees. There was a reception in a section of the building that was a mini, early computer museum and several examples of Microsoft products that we could try – games, laptops, check our email, get analysis of our handwriting, etc.

Saturday morning we enjoyed a boxed breakfast and then we were given a preview presentation from Jared Andersen, Sr. Production Manager on the new features of Microsoft Office 2007. Jared was a very dynamic speaker and you could tell he really loves his job. Office 2007 has some great features – standardization between all the products – work, excel, outlook, etc. I am particularly excited about the prediction feature in Outlook. If you have to plan a meeting for a lot of people, say 50, a pop up box will appear with suggested dates letting you know that 49 out of 50 can meet at this certain day and time, 40 can meet at this certain day and time, etc. Word also has a neat feature I am excited about – there are some preset configurations for adding a photo or other picture to a word document. You can choose where you want to locate the picture from some preset choices and the picture will be inserted and the text wrapped around it. You can preview all of your choices before making the change. There are even all kinds of effects you can add to the picture – shadowing, revolving, framed, etc.

After the opening ceremonies, the Marriott representative who helped plan the conference welcomed us. Her welcome was following by one from Redmond's Mayor, Rosemarie Ives. She asked if there was anyone from Anchorage, AK. She had nothing but good things to say about our Mayor, Mark Begich.

The business meeting was challenging and busy. The delegates were tasked with reviewing 12 proposed bylaw changes, approving the 2007-2008 budget, and elections. The majority of bylaw changes were considered housekeeping, to bring them in line with the International bylaws. The Division was hoping to have a dues increase to help offset some of their expenses; it was voted down. The delegates felt that the Chapters are also struggling and an increase would not be in the best interest of the whole.

The proposed budget was also heavily discussed. When we returned from lunch, we continued with the budget and agreed that the Board should present a balanced budget for approval; this would be done that evening. We then went on to elections. The slate was presented and the Vice President position received a nomination from the floor - Linda Cook CPS/CAP – and she was elected for the year. All business was not concluded on Saturday and the delegates agreed to meet Sunday morning at 7:00am. The meeting was adjourned so we could all prepare for the evening banquet.

The banquet decorations were lovely. I helped Dianne and her daughter put together 4 baskets from all the wonderful donations our chapter had given. We made two small “children’s baskets” and two large baskets of all kinds of goodies. We took a few things out to auction separately in the silent auction. We also had two beautiful jewelry sets that were handmade by Dianne. The auction began with a \$20 a ticket drawing for any basket on the table. A woman at my table won and chose one of our Alaska baskets. She was very, very pleased. The official amounts are not available; however those ticket sales must have come to at least \$400. One of Dianne’s jewelry sets went for \$150, the other for about \$90.00. Our other basket went for about \$100, I believe.

The food was delicious and we were entertained afterwards by a magician. Awards were then presented – none for Alaska, unfortunately.

We had a very nice Breakfast buffet in the morning. I did not attend the 7:00am resumption of the business meeting, but they were finally able to approve a balanced budget. Unfortunately, that meant that we were unable to have our presentation from International President Sandra P. Chandler CPS. President Chandler was very gracious and spoke with us briefly before and after the meeting.

After the business session, we heard from the Boeing Company's Michael Dimeo Ph. D, who spoke on our incoming theme, Forward Thinking. He touched on balance, achieving satisfaction in all areas of your life, and the road to success for us and IAAP. He, too, was a very energetic and entertaining speaker. It was very clear how much he values the Administrative Staff at Boeing.

President Petrick presented her vision and goals for the new year, which includes education, being a resource to the chapters, and two-way communication. "Forward Thinking Leads to Innovation" is our theme and each president was asked to let go of the past and embrace this new beginning. It sounds as though the new board has ambition and great ideas for the coming year.

All in all, I thought it was a very successful and educational conference.

Emily Arrowsmith
Vice President, Billikin Chapter
Alternate Delegate.