



**VIRGINIA**  
CHAPTER

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## VA Voice: February 2024

*This edition of the VA Voice is generously sponsored by Kalahari Resorts.*



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### February Meeting Recap by Allyn Hodgins

"What better way to kick off the first quarterly event of the year than a trip to the beach?! It was chilly, but oh so nice to get away for a couple of days.

We held our February Education and Networking program, along with our silent auction at The Delta Virginia Beach Waterfront February 6-7, 2024. We want to thank our gracious hosts, including Shantelle Jefferson and her amazing team, for their hospitality and ensuring we had fun and a successful event."

[Read More Here!](#)

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# #MeetingsMatter



Join MPI for our eighth annual, industry-leading Global Meetings Industry Day: Virtual experience. This live, 12-hour broadcast features education and activities from all over the world as the meeting industry comes together to celebrate, commemorate, and honor the millions of global events that impact the lives of billions of people every year.

Global Meetings Industry Day (GMID) is an international day of advocacy showcasing the undeniable value that business meetings, trade shows, incentive travel, exhibitions, conferences, and conventions bring to people, businesses, and communities. This year's theme is #TheEventProfessionalsJourney and we relish this opportunity to *celebrate* the wonders the future holds for bringing people together in meaningful ways with thousands of industry friends and colleagues.

The live broadcast will run from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. US Central Time (06:00 to 18:00 UTC -5), offering you the opportunity to connect with other industry leaders from all over the world. The broadcast is FREE, but we're asking you to consider donating US\$10 toward supporting the efforts of the MPI Foundation, which has awarded more than US\$5 million in grants, scholarships, and research since 2009.

GMID: Virtual is the perfect event to rally together—because when we meet, we change the world.

[Register for GMID's Live Broadcast Here.](#)

[Read here!](#)

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## MPI Virginia Upcoming Events

March Member Orientation

March 13th, 2024

[Register Here](#)



March Chapter Meet-Up

Marker 20, Hampton, VA

March 27th, 2024

Registration Coming Soon!



April Member Orientation

April 10th, 2024

[Register Here](#)



Spring Quarterly Education & Networking Program

Hilton Richmond Downtown

April 15th & 16th, 2024

[Register Here](#)



Global Meetings Industry Day  
(GMID)

April 11th, 2024

[Register for MPI's Virtual Broadcast Here](#)





MPI's World Education Congress  
(WEC).

Louisville, KY

May 21st-23rd, 2024

[Register Here](#)

2024 Annual Conference:  
Save the Date

August 5th - 7th, 2024

The Kimpton Forum Hotel  
Charlottesville, VA



November Quarterly Education &  
Networking Program: Save the Date

November 19th & 20th, 2024

Hilton Norfolk the Main

Norfolk, VA



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## Leadership News

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**Looking to gain exposure at the Annual Conference taking place in August in Charlottesville? Volunteer on the Annual Conference committee!**

If interested, please email Kim Carragher, our Annual Conference Chair, [kim.carragher@whitelodging.com](mailto:kim.carragher@whitelodging.com).

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# VOLUNTEERS WANTED

for Board of Directors & Committee roles.



## **Get Involved with YOUR MPI VA Chapter**

We are looking for volunteers to join committees and the MPI Virginia board! Time to get involved and get all the benefits out of your membership! Please reach out to Megan Hazzard at [Hazo29@henrico.us](mailto:Hazo29@henrico.us) if you are interested in learning more about how to get involved with YOUR chapter.

We have openings in Membership, Finance, Communications, and Education so wherever your interest in the meeting profession lies, we would love to have you!

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## Membership News



February's Featured Member is Cindy Bell. Cindy is a Meeting Planner with NRC Health and has been a member of MPI Virginia for 2 years. Get to know more about Cindy below:

**Q: Why did you join MPI Virginia?**

A: To build connections within the industry, develop my continuing education and to stay up to date on new trends!

**Q: What do you enjoy the most about the meeting and events industry?**

A: I enjoy to make people happy and bring people together!

**Q: What advice would you give someone entering the meeting and events industry?**

A: Always address urgent issues first, critical thinking and problem solving will be very important in your day to day but especially in urgent situations. And finally, have fun!

**Q: How do you define success?**

A: I have learned that successful people are the product of good teamwork, and at this stage of my career, success is being a great team player. In the events industry it always takes a team to pull off a great event!

**Q: What is one item you cannot live without?**

A: Dark Chocolate

**Q: If you had to eat one meal every day for the rest of your life, what would it be?**

A: Shrimp or any seafood!

**Q: What is your favorite hobby?**

A: Playing Bingo!

**Q: What would be the theme song of your life right now?**

A: Shake It Off by Taylor Swift

Thank you Cindy for letting us get to know more about you!

If you would like to be featured in one of our upcoming editions of The VA VOICE, please complete our [Member Spotlight Questionnaire](#).

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**Happy January Membership Anniversaries!**

Lauran Dangler, Crestline Hotels & Resorts - 30 Years

Anita Chapman Seay, CMP, Jefferson Lab - 29 Years

Wendy Evalle, Hilton Hotel & Hilton Garden Inn - VA Beach - 10 Years

Cheryl Morales, Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge, 9 Years

Donna Casanave - 3 Years

Edilia Bendel, SOAR 365 - 2 Years

Lyndsi Hale, Mountain Lake Lodge - 2 Years

Martina James, Bellatrix Consulting Group - 2 Years

Danielle Woerner, Coastal Hospitality - 2 Years

Helen Morton, Delaware North at Shenandoah National Park - 1 Year

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### **Welcome New Members!**

Kelly Bassford, Manager of Events & Engagement, Lightwave Dental Management

Rachael Holt, CMP, Assistant Director of Sales, The Westin Richmond

Jordan Hook, Corporate Meeting Professional, Squirrels Baseball

Lauren Salsbury, Association/Not for Profit Meeting Professional, United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS)

Lori Whaley, CFRE, Meeting Management Professional - Planner, Tradewinds Consulting

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Want to shine a spotlight on who you are, personally and professionally? We're looking for members who want to be featured in the next issue of the VA VOICE.

If that's you, [please submit your profile today!](#)

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## Update your MPI Member Profile Today!

It is essential that our members have fully-completed and up-to-date information on their member profile page so we can make their membership tailor-made to their needs. Please take a look at your current profile and make any necessary changes, today. It only takes a couple of minutes!

Check out this video for step-by-step instructions on how to edit your profile.



## Featured News

### 12 Ways Event Planners Can Harness the Power of AI

*"Artificial intelligence has the power to take traditional event planning to a much higher level, says [Nick Borelli](#), marketing director of [Zenus](#), an AI-driven platform that measures attendee sentiment. AI tools aren't a replacement for human creativity, but rather a catalyst for innovative thinking and problem-solving, he told a record crowd of 255 meeting professionals at Northstar Meetings Group's annual [Independent Planner Education Conference](#) last week in Greenville, S.C."*



[Read More](#)

## Thank You to our Sponsors!





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The VA Voice Newsletter is your monthly source for member news, events, and industry updates. It's produced for members and non-members alike. Have a colleague or prospective member who could benefit from receiving the VA Voice? Email Claire to have them added to our distribution list.

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