



VIRGINIA
CHAPTER

VA Voice: October 2023

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



**A message from your 2023-2024 MPI-Virginia President,
Martina James**

"As we are smack in the middle of conference and event season and what feels like when *EVENTS ARE FINALLY BACK* in full force, do you ever find yourself lost in the crowd? Do you find yourself comfortable in a room full of strangers or does it bring overwhelming anxiety? In an industry where connection drives the work we do, how are you doing with making meaningful connections?"

[Read here!](#)

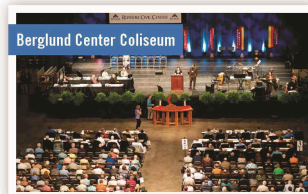
Check out October's Featured Destination,
Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge!

Learn more and connect with our feature destination [here](#).

If you're interested in becoming the next monthly featured destination, reach out to [Martina James!](#)



5,000+
GUEST ROOMS

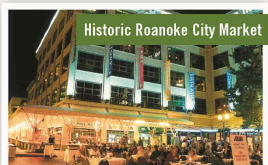


683,000+ SQ.FT.
of Meeting Space
(Two Civic Centers and an IACC-Approved Conference Center)

The Roanoke Valley in Virginia's Blue Ridge is the ultimate destination for your next meeting. The beauty of the spectacular Blue Ridge Mountains combined with the refined sophistication and vibrant culture of the Roanoke Valley, makes this region a natural choice for a meeting or convention.

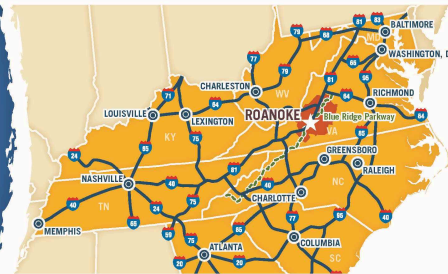
Visitors will experience breathtaking scenic beauty, thrilling outdoor adventures, mouth-watering cuisine, inspiring arts and culture, and luxurious, affordable accommodations. And, the mountains serve as the perfect backdrop for our first-class meeting facilities.

With over 683,000 square feet of meeting space and 5,000+ guest rooms, Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge is ready to help you start planning your next meeting.



➤ Endless Supply of **Things to Do**, including **National Attractions**

Largest Destination in Virginia
along the **Blue Ridge Parkway** and
Interstate 81



Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge – VisitVBR.com/Meetings
Phone: 800-635-5535 or 540-342-6025 Fax: 540-342-7119

[**More Info Here!**](#)

Interested in learning more? Reach out to Rachael Baxley,
Meeting Sales & Service Manager, at (540) 342-9352.

Save the Date!

First Fridays for Coffee

Friday, November 10th

Friday, December 1st

8:00am-9:00am

Wednesday with MPI Virginia Happy Hour

Wednesday, November 15th

Wednesday, December 20th

5:00pm-7:00pm

November Quarterly Education & Networking Program

November 2nd-3rd, 2023

The Graduate Richmond

[**Register Here!**](#)



October's Featured Member is Cheryl E. Simmons. Cheryl is an Event Manger with the Christian Broadcast Network (CBN) and has been a member of MPI Virginia since July 2023. Get to know more about Cheryl below:

Q: Why did you join MPI Virginia?

A: It is always my goal to be continually growing and challenging myself. The world is changing quickly, and I want to be educated, inspired and ready to tackle all the projects set before me. Joining MPI will assist me with the education needed for this. In addition, I always want to be around like-minded professionals that stive to be the best, to be encouragers, to mentor and to give back. This is exactly what MPI does.

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

A: Travel, making experiences for our attendees, working with a great team around the world. Meeting needs across the globe with evangelism and humanitarian arms of the organization I work with.

Q: If you could choose anyone as a mentor, who would you choose and why?

A: Corrie ten Boom. In her writings, interviews, and her life, she would speak life into everyone and every situation. She was in a terrible place in her life and her faith and attitude never wavered. She was a woman of God that was reaching everyone around her.

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

A: Do not be afraid to fail. Grow from every experience.

Q: What is one item you cannot live without?

A: Coffee

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

A: I am very specific. I love fresh salad with grilled chicken, fresh veggies and fruit, caramelized nuts, dried cranberries, homemade croutons, and freshly made dressing on the side. I would splurge with whipped butter and a warm roll. :)

Thank you Cheryl 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](#).

Membership News

MPI Virginia is pleased to announce the offering of two membership scholarships for 2023!



We are excited to offer:

- One full scholarship will be available for a Meeting Planner.
- One full scholarship will be available for a Supplier.

If you accept this scholarship, you are pledging to pay back your scholarship to **MPI Virginia** by volunteering on a committee and attending at least (2) quarterly educational meetings per year. Please complete the application by Wednesday, November 1, 2023. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to the VP of Membership, Lori Leib at lori.leib@hamptoncvb.com.

[Apply Here!](#)



VOLUNTEERS WANTED

for Board of Directors & Committee roles.



MPI Virginia is YOUR chapter and we want all of our members to feel that they have the opportunity to be active in volunteer roles if they want to serve on the Board of Directors or a Committee.

Volunteer roles vary in scope and time commitment requirements, but we have several open positions and invite anyone interested in serving on the Board of Directors or on a Committee to please reach out to [Megan Hazzard](#), Director of Leadership Development.



We'd love to send a shout out to our members during their birthday month, but we need to know when your big day is.... so tell us!

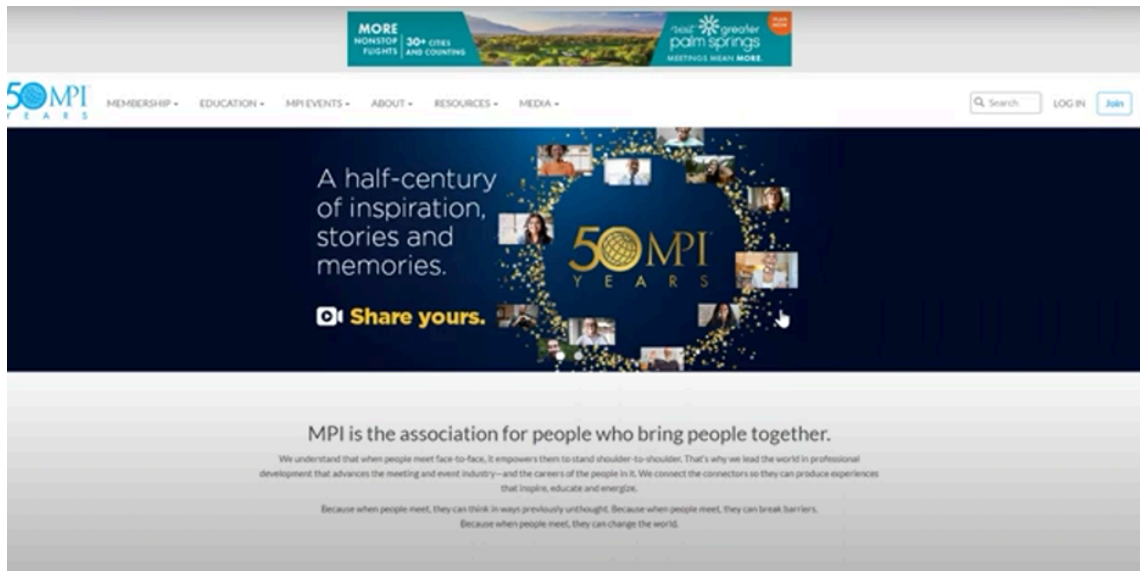
Let us know your birthday here!

Don't worry- we aren't asking for the year- just the month and day. All birthdays taking place during the same month will be announced together.

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.



Happy October Membership Anniversaries!

Heather Buss, CHSE, Associated Luxury Hotels International- 3 Years

Kenzie Cox, Drive Shack Inc- 2 Years

Casey Armstrong, Visit Richmond- 1 Year

Susan Donohue, Tech Serve Alliance- 1 Year

Emily McMahan, Troutman Pepper- 1 Year

Dean Swift, VA IT USA- 1 Year

Welcome New Members!

Brittany Snowden- LTD Hospitality

Featured News

Budgeting & Contracting Tips for the Ever-Changing Event Pricing Landscape

"More than ever before, environmental, social and economic sustainability is a top priority for leaders across a range of industries, especially when it comes to

holding business events.

Organizing an event is no small feat. It is a complex task that requires meticulous planning, coordination and execution. Adding sustainability to the deliverables can seem daunting.

However, at [Destination Canada](#), we started to embrace this challenge ahead of [Innovate Canada](#), one of our signature events, which we hosted in [Waterloo](#), Ontario, in May.

This exclusive event gave clients from across the world a chance to see Canada's innovation and leadership in the [advanced manufacturing](#) sector first-hand.

This carbon-neutral event taught us a lot as we explore ways to make business events more sustainable around the world.

Here's what we learned..."



[Read More](#)

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