

SOCIETY FOR DESIGN ADMINISTRATION
EDSymposium08
Boston, Massachusetts
May, 2008

EDSymposium08 is only a memory now and, unfortunately, we are back to the real world, but what a great time we had in Boston! I had the very special honor of being the recipient of the SDA New York Chapter Scholarship to attend the national convention. I want to publicly state that without their generosity, I would not have been able to make the trip. Thank you, New York!!!

EDSymposium08 was packed with interesting seminars beginning with the keynote address, “The Door – How to Use Five Natural Laws of Achievement to Organizational Success” by Bill Truby, MA, MFCC that was just excellent. I encourage you to check out his website at www.billtruby.com. Here, you can read about the Five Natural Laws of Achievement. It will be worth your time.

My favorite session was “The Hard Talk: Tools for Difficult Conversations” presented by Sandy Blaha. Ms. Blaha highlighted the book, *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking when Stakes are High* by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler. This book describes techniques for effective negotiation and conflict resolution in the context of important, potentially life-changing conversations whether at work or in your personal life. Amazingly enough, this just happened to be the same book I was reading on the plane to Boston and so it was of special interest to me. It is an excellent book, by the way, and I highly recommend it.

All of those attending the sessions had the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of venues—from financial management, to project administration, best practices and PEG roundtables just to name a few. I took lots of notes and listened intently to each session I attended. Then, when I returned to my home base, I was happy to share what I learned while at convention with others in our Dallas Chapter. I also shared points of discussion with my own firm after returning home. But, let me make it clear, EDSymposium08 was not all work and no play. Far, far from it!

The Host Chapter Party on The Spirit of Boston the night we arrived was fantastic! The Boston Chapter went all out making sure their guests had a night to remember. Imagine my surprise (happy surprise) when I found myself standing in line with the New York Chapter attendees who were also waiting to board for the dinner cruise. Instantly, I had a group of new friends, and became an adopted New Yorker with a Texas accent! My New York sisters were very genuine and welcoming. After boarding, the evening was even more wonderful with delicious food, cocktails, a raffle with great prizes, and a deejay that played a great mix of music, both old and new. We took a walk onto the deck of The Spirit of Boston. Standing there in the dark of night and seeing the magic of Boston twinkling with tiny, magical lights was lovely. Oh, and did I mention the dancing? Somehow a few of us lost our inhibitions and became much better dancers as the evening progressed, or so we thought (I did mention the cocktails

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earlier, didn't I?) Let's put it this way, maybe we just THOUGHT we were better dancers. And, who knew I could do the electric slide? Okay, I'll admit it wasn't pretty, but it was fun!

On Saturday afternoon a large group of us went on a Duck Boat Tour of Boston. Actually there were so many of us that we had to split into two groups. The guide on our boat was Jason of Jason and the Argonauts fame. He was quite a character to say the least! He was dressed in shorts, sandals, a red cape, and gold leaf headband on his shaved head (and had great legs, I might add). He seemed to be very knowledgeable about all the Boston sights and history. I must admit, I was in awe when I saw historical sites I had previously only read about. Being a native Texan who is very proud of our Old West history that officially began in 1836, I realize now that most Bostonians would only laugh and consider Texas history the "recent past" compared to theirs! After we explored the streets of Boston, our boat went right into the Charles River for more sightseeing. It was beautiful and the weather was perfect! When we missed a turn going back to our hotel, our guide deftly made a U-turn in the middle of the intersection. He assured us that no one would notice. Of course no one would notice; it was only a 36 ft. boat with a group of passengers quacking all the while he made the turn! This tour was another fun highlight of the trip!

On a separate note, I cannot say enough about how meaningful it is to me, personally and professionally, to participate in SDA. I have gained much more confidence, experience, and knowledge in a safe and supportive environment in areas I could have never imagined five years ago. The friendships I have made in SDA are the best part and are very dear to me. They will last a lifetime.

It is important for me to say that the Boston Chapter and EDSymposium08's committee are to be commended for all the planning and hard work that went into making this national convention such a truly memorable experience. It was phenomenal!

I look forward to seeing all of you again at EDSymposium09 in San Francisco or at Leadership next year! The SDA sisterhood continues!