

Greetings, Fellow Members!

What a TERRIFIC conference! Jeanne (Carangelo) and Paula (Flisnik), Bob Hess, Secretary; Co-Chairs; Misty Teitel, Helen Lavas, Program; Sue Warwick, Casey Napoli, Site & Hospitality; Christina Verratti, Special Event; Julie Chrysler, Josie Dominquez, Fundraising; Arlene Martin, Registration; Sue Bock, Printing; Rhonda Butler, MarketPlace; Capital, Burning Issues. You did a stand-up, fantastic job. The hotel, food, rooms, speakers, everything was top shelf. Congratulations on a great conference!

When I arrived at the Radisson, for me, it was bittersweet; after working closely with Maria these past two years, it was coming to an end. On the other hand, I was excited about attending a well-put together conference.

When I arrived at the Radisson, for me, the dynamics of the conference was different; I was an attendee, not an organizer.

There I was with fellow Capital members, getting our registration packets and looking forward to our first speaker, running into fellow association members, catching up, learning what's new, what's different and what's changed.

Lunch was delicious, speaker touched on "Gems from the heart..." and we're off and running. Next thing I know, I'm in the back of a bus heading to the Utica Brewery for a tour and MORE FOOD! Pictures with Schultz and Dooley, variety of beverages to taste, Italian Pub food to munch on and MORE FOOD – A taste of Utica. Mix in between all that with laughter, hello's to the various chapter members we haven't seen since the last conference and, of course, dancing! It had been a long time since I had attended a conference as a regular attendee – no deadlines, I thoroughly enjoyed it. A whole different perspective.

Thursday, workshops are terrific, and onto the Annual Meeting - Capital was proud to nominate Kathy Leonard for Honorary Member, Maria's parting speech as President, and thank you, Maria for passing the Maestro's wand. Wow, now it's my turn:

*"To those of you who are new; one, two years; to those of you who are seasoned; ten, twenty, plus years...to those of you who work at nursing homes, hospitals, hospice, mental health, and others, you may be a block away from your competition, you may be the only facility in your county. You may be from Buffalo or Long Island or everywhere around this state. You are the ones, when someone comes to you panicking and says, "We have a problem!" You look calmly at him/her and say, "It's not a problem, it's a challenge, and we'll work this out and find the best way to handle it." You get frazzled, you have project and after project piling up on your desk and someone needs to talk with you...the constant interruption...You are the Volunteer Director.*

*We, here at this conference, band together. If you are new, you may see this as you walk around. I will say this, if you don't feel it yet, you will be by tomorrow before you leave to go home! We network. The competitive walls do not exist. We look at each one here and are genuinely thrilled with each other's successes.*

*We can't wait for our annual conference so we can reconnect, network with fellow directors, share successful programs so we can possibly make it work back home.*

*Our Association is strong because WE are strong individuals banning together.*

*I look at our past presidents – Maria, Kathy, Louise, Bonnie, Camille and those before, and I want to mirror their strengths. The strengths that will help our Association continue to be a cohesive assembly of men and women.*

*Our annual conference is valuable – we get so much out of the workshops, from each other and the camaraderie that is built is priceless. We need each other. We need the association. This association needs you. No one understands our jobs; yet everyone wants it! You deserve the pat on the back, you are strong, faithful and united... You are the Volunteer Directors of New York State, and thank you, Capital for your friendship and continued support. NYSADVS, it is my honor to be your new president.”*

Now, the changeover. We have a new board – Bob Hess, VP, Kathleen Dalton, Treasurer, Sue Bock, Secretary and Arlene Martin, Nominating. The new presidents and chapter reps will be listed on our website as soon as we gather the information. Our new board will meet and work together to continue to build our association.

My strategic plan will be placed on the website. We have continued concerns regarding membership and our ongoing burning issues. We also have a challenge ahead of us. Our association is in need of building our finances. Our new board will be brainstorming and as soon as we come up with ideas, I will let you know.

Now, the conference ends in a big way! Leslie Gibson was phenomenal. She especially touched my heart, and funny bone, with her “Healing Power of Humor.” I had the pleasure of being on the receiving end of Clowns on Rounds when a family member was recovering at Sunnyview in Schenectady years ago. As much as they lifted my brother-in-law’s spirit, the rest of us in the room felt their joyous presence as well. To quote Norman Cousins, “Never deny a diagnosis, but do deny the negative verdict that may go with it.” That quote can be used in countless ways. Two years from now, we’ll come back to that.

I want to thank Kathleen Donnelly and Kaye Derman who graciously accepted the duties of co-chairing our 2011 conference in Long Island.

Go online to [www.hiltonlongisland.com](http://www.hiltonlongisland.com), check out where our next conference will be and mark your calendar now so you can attend – June 1, 2, 3 of next year.

Also, there was a lot of “buzz” at our conference in getting a bus (round-trip) starting in Buffalo and working its way down the thruway picking us up – Rochester, Syracuse, Utica, Albany, Kingston, Poughkeepsie - and taking us to the 2011 Long Island conference and back home. If you are interested, call me 518.773.5408.

I want to say hello and welcome to the new comers at the conference: Amy Bush, Beth Gillander, Beth Irons, Kari Johnson, Jarrod Kolodziejczyk, Anne McGillicuddy, Joe Miota, Casey Napoli, Terri Welcher. I’m sure you had the opportunity to get to know your chapter members a little better. Stay in touch with them and reach out to other chapter members if you have any questions. We are fortunate to have a great group of men and women who are all too happy to help you with any challenge that comes your way. AND, don’t forget to get on the Website’s Message Board for feedback.

Ending on a positive note, remember (one of many things) that Leslie (Gibson) shared with us, “Opportunityisnowhere”. Thank you for this privilege of being your new president. It will be an honor to serve you. So, let’s take this *opportunity* to move forward, friends. Have a fun, safe summer. I’ll be in touch.

*Note to Capital, “This reminds me of a limerick!”*

***“Together We Smile...Together We Laugh...Together We Live!”***