

2015 WFA Convention, Reno, Nev.

The first class we attended was Managing Beastly People. Jack Agati was the speaker and he was very informative on the reasons people do what they do. The behaviors are purposeful and goal- directed. We need to hold them responsible for their actions and accountable for the consequences that may result. Every organization has today's "Popular" typecasting people, Tank Commanders Snipers, Demolition Experts, Exploders, Yes, but... We can't--- {Prophets of Doom, Spies, But what about--- skeet shooters, Grenade Launchers, Know it all, Disruptive, and people who take advantage of stress times. It was a very good class, and it makes one realize where some people come from. Those who are power hungry, wanting to be involved in every aspect of the organization and why.

I learned the word "Try" is not a word, it is either Yes or No. I will "Think" about it also means usually at the end No. If you use the word "You" at the beginning of a sentence it means trouble! The success of any organization is like living under an umbrella, if one spoke breaks it will fold! A very good way to sum it up.

The first guest speaker at the convention was Randy Bernard, former CEO and founder of RFD TV, with viewers of 50 million and now CEO of Ghost Tunes, in partner with Garth Brooks. His career started at the Mid State Fair, where he hired the top cowboys in the world, Ty Murray and Cody Lambert, for a head-to-head match-up. From there he created the most successful event in the country the Professional Bull Riders Association. PBRA, the powerhouse organization he created has taken the world by storm. He shared with us his life experiences and was a great informative speaker. (As I sat there I realized I was seeing my husband's most favorite things in the world come to life, the PBRA and Rural TV, and there stood the founder of both organizations.)

Cotton Rosser was recognized for his many years of service as well as Happy Pony rides who have been involved with the fair industry for 55 years!

We walked the Trade Show, and the most impressive thing there was Big Jim's new concession booth, it is a beauty! A vintage trailer was interesting, but all in all I felt the trade show lacked luster and not as large as usual.

Next class was the recruitment of strategies for Executive Leadership, how to go about hiring a new CEO. Not that we are, "Thank God" but it was interesting, even Dave was there! But the information may come in handy y e a r s from now. There has been a 50% turn over the last year in Fair Managers. We learned questions to ask during the interview. Also things to do like back ground checks are very important, and what you are able to check. Trust your GUT, it will always be right! Also hiring a third party is very worthwhile.

5 of us went to dinner at the Western Village and the food was great and thanks to our wonderful manager, Dave, who very gracefully paid for our dinner. We sure did not expect this. It was a great way to end the day.

Tuesday morning session was on Attracting opening day media and beyond, one thing I learned was "If the press does not come to you, go to them"! Never shut out the press, Keep you fair in the news YEAR AROUND. Not just during or before the fair. Keep the public informed of what is going on at the fairgrounds each month! Karen Mc McCullough was the speaker and her one main goal was put WOW in your customer's service. Everyone is talking about branding. Brands are hot! Today, your brand is the core of you company and the heart of your culture. Today everyone is connected, so we MUST be ahead of the grove and have information people want. The word Branding is not what you think of your selves but what people think of you! Do you realize a person makes an opinion in 7 seconds about a person, and your company? So first impressions are very important.

Birth Order class: This is one of the most interesting classes a person can take; it makes you understand why you do what you do. It was entertaining and informative. Each position in the birth order brings unique characteristics, Jody really enjoyed it, and I for one went to one the first convention I attended in 1988, it was great then and is great now.

The area meeting was held and each fair spoke about their fairs and what they were doing and their fair dates and themes. Santa Clara Fair talked about the success of their Bingo games, Cow Palace, the future of the removal of the parking lot and the possibility of putting in a shopping center. Salinas Valley will be spending 1 ¼ million of remodeling of one of their 30 year old buildings.

Freedom of expression, a liability for you fair and the target of professional litigators. It was interesting to hear from Nevada county fair and what they had to endure when they booked Have Trunk Will Travel. Each speaker shared their experiences and lessons they learned. It was depressing to hear what "Professional Plaintiffs" do. The insurance companies will settle and NOT go to trail, they wants things off the book. PETA, where do I start, we were told if they are not creating a safety issue let they do what they are doing, with the Freedom of Expression they have the right to talk and give out ligature, we have more authority inside of the fair rather than outside. PETA, they do not go away. We have to remember, it is not personal, it is just business. We must also take pictures, document, and document!

We ended the night having dinner with several other fair managers and Read and Steve bought dinner at a Basque Restaurant and it was great. Thank you is such an understatement two words. We ended the evening listening to the Showcase music and I won \$100.00 at the raffle!

The last day of the convention we attended an event called NICA/SYSCO kitchen tour and educational workshop. It was great! The best of the convention. The event was sponsored by Smithfield Farmland; we learned the cost factors of the pork industry, the locations of the processing factories, how the gestation crates work, and the breed of pigs they use. They talked about the roller coaster ride of 2013, due to a cold weather virus that 6 % of all the baby piglets died. They even told us how the pigs were killed. Someone ask that questions and we were informed on how it was done. The average hog is processed at 285 pounds.

Now came the great part, a private tour of the different restaurants by the top Chef, Jerry Ignatich who lead the behind the scenes tour of several Grand Sierra Resort kitchens. First we toured the EDR dining

room, one for the employees; they charge \$2.00 for each meal. They have been providing dinners for the employees since 1978.

Next came the laundry room, then the bakery, where we could not only smell the sweet smells of homemade bread but the oven where they were baked. They purchase 15 million dollars of product each year. The original ovens that were installed 34 years ago are still in use and they are on 24/7.

Then on to the food warehouse, as I looked into the large walk in I could see produce from our local growers and berries from Driscolls. They have 750,000 each year go in and out of the warehouse. Inspectors are on dock each day for fresh meats. The buffet kitchen serves an average of 1,500-3,500 meals each day, but will be closing for 3 months for remodeling soon. The Asian kitchen was very different, a lot of Turbo Woks, lines of white plates and dishes. The Briscola, Italian kitchen was impressive; all chasses were behind locked doors! Each kitchen is different in design, each created for the types of food they prepared. There is a cleaning crew of 50 employees who do nothing but keep the kitchens clean, with the budget of \$150,000 a year.

The Charlie Palmer was quiet different, has a revolving oven that ALL the steaks are cooked at one time in the form of a whole piece of meat, baked 2 ½ hours and set to rest. Then cut in serving pieces. (I learned something).

Next came the Café, they serve ¾ million meals a month! The largest kitchen. An average of 2 to 3 thousand meals a day. Jerry talked about the Banquet can serve up to 7,000 meals in one day.

Now on to the final event we attended the butcher shop with the sectioning of a hog. We learned about the cuts of meat, both familiar and new. The feet, ham, boneless sirloin, tender loin, baby back ribs, ribs, county style, St, Louis style, (this was a new name for me) shoulder pork butt, pork belly, bacon, flat iron, jowl, neck. Then they informed us every inch of the hog is sold, inside and out. Foreign counties buy even the glands, lips, organs. Even the pulimatory glands are sold for medical purposes for \$200.00 an ounce.

The tour ended and we learned so much. If any one goes to the convention the next time it is held in Reno make sure you attend this very worthwhile class.

Director, Loretta Estrada

January 15, 2015