PNW & PSW Joint Forum – Oahu Hawaii May 8-10, 2024

Report to Chapter 99, Silicon Valley

By: Laura Grabar

Attendees for Silicon Valley Chapter 99 – Kayla Alvarado, Shawna Alvarado, Joan Bremer, Alyanna Espina, Laura Grabar, Pam Henley, Misha Homara, Marlene O'Donnell, Angie Ramos, Monica Sanchez, Sarah Thorvund, Brenda Trejo and April Vicchrilli.

The conference began Wednesday morning with a variety of fun activities for attendees that arrived early. These were followed by the First Timers meeting and the Chapter Presidents meeting. The day concluded with the Welcome Party. There was a nice spread of food and this was the perfect time to say hi to friends we had not seen in a while. It was also nice to see members from the PSW that we usually see only at the National Conference.

Thursday began with a welcome from Mayor Rick Blangiardi who was very humble and has great respect and is thankful to women as they are very inspiring to him.

The first speaker of the day was Christine Camp on overcoming adversity. This was a woman that started a company with an idea and learned to leverage that idea into a multi-million dollar company. Her idea was to take an adaptive approach to reuse existing infrastructure to fill the gap of what is needed in Hawaii. Which is affordable housing. Along the way she learned that relationships are important and that you need to be present to make a difference. When her plans fell through instead of walking away she guaranteed payment to the bank if they would give her time. By being optimistic and working with partners she was able to pay back the bank for the failed venture and continued to leverage and grow her business. Her belief is that your word is all you have so you keep your obligation and don't walk away.

This was followed by the joint business meeting which spoke on membership retention. Statistics show that most members leave our organization between two and four years. We discussed some ways to retrain members. Important aspects are to welcome and encourage new members, follow up to see how they are doing, get them involved.

Thursday's lunch speaker on "Herstory" was unable to attend. The last minute infill was our own Misha Homara. It was fantastic to hear how she became involved in her family company and to see how far she has come in a short time.

The afternoon panel was on problems with logistics and cultural issues in construction. There were women from Hawaii and Alaska on this panel. It was interesting to learn about the delays in getting material delivered and then getting the materials to remote areas. Jobs that would take a month on the mainland can take several months in both Hawaii and Alaska due to weather and shipping issues. There are also cultural issues that arise when native issues are unearthed during construction. These issues often slow or stop construction until resolved.

The day was concluded with speeches from the women that are running for National Offices.

Friday began with more joint business. We heard from the national committees and what the National Board has accomplished or is working on for this year. This was followed by a panel on Working Mothers and Caregivers which our own Shawna Alvarado was a panelist. Important takeaways were 1) you need a life plan; who will take care of you as you age. 2) What gets you through; family, friends, co-workers, employers, beliefs? The important thing is to show up and give whatever you can that day.

The lunch speaker was Alice Inoue on What is Your Superpower. She has created a system to help you discover your Integral Archetype. Her book is Master Your Superpowers. Alice uses elements as key components. This process helps to reveal how you express yourself. It also helps to understand others around you and why you may have conflict with co-workers. It was interesting to learn that I am Wood & Earth. My integrated architype is thriving manifestor. It was very interesting to see how the different elements fit together or fight each other. I

would highly recommend taking this test and see where you fall on the scales. It was fun seeing how each of us fits with the description of elements and with the strengths and weaknesses as well.

We concluded the afternoon with region business. The region budget for 2023-2024 NAWIC year was presented, voted and passed. Block Kids regional winner was announced, Membership and WIC Week awards were announced. After the committee reports and any new business the Joint Forum concluded with an invitation to PNW Fall Conference hosted by our chapter this November in Santa Clara. Because this was a joint forum, regional business and awards were done separately and not at the banquet.

The evening concluded with the banquet where we were entertained by Taiko Drums, and a Lion Dance where we fed the lions for good luck. It was a fun and entertaining evening.