2022 Annual Conference – August 17-20

Report to Chapter 99, Silicon Valley NAWIC
By: Laura Grabar, 2021-2022 President

Kayla Alvarado, Shawna Alvarado, Joan Bremer, Kirsten Bureman, Laura Grabar, Marlene O'Donnell and Angie Ramos represented Chapter 99 at the 2022 Annual Conference.

Annual conference began Wednesday evening August 17 with the Welcome Party giving everyone an opportunity to network and mingle with members and guests. It was a relaxing evening before the official start of the conference Thursday morning.

Thursday morning the conference began with NAWIC business. There was a review of what the retiring board had accomplished this past year. One goal was to change renewals for new members. Members that join November 1 or later will now renew their memberships on the anniversary of when they joined instead of renewing by October 1. In making this change it got rid of the whole issue with the second year having to pro-rate dues based on when they joined. NAWIC is currently at 5,687 members. There were 369 members in attendance of which 231 were first timers. There were also 89 guests.

The opening keynote speaker was Siri Lindley with her message of Winning Big and Living Fearlessly. In order to live fearlessly you have to be the best you can be and do the best with what you have. According to Siri where your focus goes your energy will go. If you don't like the way things are going you need to change the way you look at things and this will cause things to change. Anger and blame disempowers you. If you blame someone for the bad you also have to thank them for any good that happens as well. This gives them the power and not you. In order to move your goals forward you need to stack the wins and not the doubts. In order to achieve your dreams you need to answer 2 questions: 1) What do I need to let go of? 2) Who do I need to become? By answering these questions you remove the fear and doubt that hold you back.

The first breakout session I attended was The Accidental Leader by Kiki L'Italien. Leadership is not something that you are born with it is something you just do. How do you become a leader, the first time you either volunteer or asked by someone directly. The direct ask is important because you will have to delegate responsibility and this is done by asking someone to lead. Leaders are always looking to see who is coming up after them. You need to build them up. The top three leadership competencies are trustworthy, empowers others, and fosters a sense of connection and belonging. Trust is important in a leader. You have to trust in yourself so others can trust you. You show your trustworthiness by establishing consistency by transparency and intentionality. Led by example "Say what mean and mean what you say". Follow through and follow up so that no one is left behind. Treat everyone equally. Failure is part of leadership. It is called research. Not everything will work. Things will dip but you need to make it past the dip. If you quit you will lose trust. Leaders follow the lets do this and get everyone involved. This empowers others. It creates inclusion and equity. When trust is low in creates redundancy, bureaucracy and it is difficult finding volunteers. It creates high staff turnover or loss of members in organizations. While high trust creates growth, enhanced innovations and improved collaboration. The take away is to remember the direct ask, cultivate trustworthiness, care and always say "Thank you". If you care you will be careful.

The Industry luncheon Keynote Speaker was Steve Demetriou Chair and CEO of Jacobs Engineering. The topic was Living Inclusion Every Day. According to Mr Demetriou women are

50% of the population but only 10.5% of the construction workforce and only 15% of Fortune 500 companies employ women in leadership roles. The ways to inclusion and equity are:

1) Do the right thing
2) Accept the challenge
3) Aim higher
4) Live inclusively

By follow these ideals equity and inclusion will continue to grow in all aspects of your life not just the workforce.

The second breakout session I attended was Developing Resilient and Fearlessly & Authentic Leaders with Siri Lindley. In order to become a leader you have to know yourself or your story. Your story begins as a child. What you want to become. Stories are software not hardware. Your story can change and you can change it. What do you want most in life? This is how your story is created. Tell yourself "I have everything I need to survive or achieve" Ask what can I achieve now? Focus on what you need right now. Don't worry about the past or future. Stay in the present. Focus on what you can control. When someone asks you to do something ask yourself will it take you towards your goal or away? If it takes you away politely decline. In order to prevent burnout you need to make balance in your life. When you become overwhelmed you're everywhere but in the present. You must be present to continue to change your story. It is your story so own it. Only you can decide what story you want to be or live. Expectations only lead to disappointment. Trade expectations for appreciations. Don't expect perfection. Winning is making progress but you can only win by learning and you learn from your failures. Treat yourself like you do others. Schedule me time, remember that one hour is only 4 percent of the day. What is going to matter most? This is the question you need to ask yourself.

Our general session on Thursday afternoon was a panel discussion on Leadership and Your Path Forward. It is important to set your priorities in work, personal and family each day to achieve balance. You need to know what you want. Prioritize in order to be productive. What you don't finish today will still be there tomorrow. By prioritizing you accomplish the things that need to be done. When you find yourself off task you need to take a break and find a quiet area. Sit down, take some deep breaths and relax for 30 seconds to 1 minute. Afterward return to work or task. This helps clear the mind and let you get back on task. What is most important are good communication and to be yourself.

We ended our Thursday with the 10 year anniversary of our sister chapter from Guam. We had a wonderful evening meeting the ladies of the Guam chapter and learning about their island. They wrote lyrics to Eddie Rabbits song Drivin' My Life Away and performed it for the Pacific Northwest Region. We joined in through Karaoke. After the performance Silicon Valley and Guam did a flag pass instead of the traditional gavel pass leaving Silicon Valley with their Guamanian Flag. It was a fantastic ending to a busy day.

Friday began with two back to back breakout sessions. I attended a two part session on Talk to Anyone About Anything Anywhere. This seminar focused on how to introduce yourself and meet other people. How we connect with people is very important.
Pro tips:

1) Focus on person or group you are speaking with pay attention, watch body language and look at them. The goal is to get know them, ask questions being purposeful and mindful.
2) Exit conversation politely and respectfully. Don't make plans to meet if you are not interested. Say it was nice to meet you or it was pleasure speaking with you.
3) Listen more than you speak.

4) Be a good connector – become genuinely interested in other people, make notes on the back of their business cards to remember them. Introduce them to people you know that have similar interests or careers.
5) Know your value position. You are selling yourself to another person. Not what you do but who you are.

Most important thing – Ask their name
Second most important thing – remember their name
To help remember someone's name us "The Memory Stack"

1) Introduce yourself and get their name. Repeat their name back to them. Ask for them to repeat if you did not get it the first time.
2) Where do you live
3) Ask about family
4) Ask about pets
5) Ask about work – do they like or don't like about what they do
6) Ask about travel
7) Ask about hobbies or sports - questions 3 – 7 can be answered when you ask about their free time or what they did last weekend.
8) Bright ideas – ask about new things in their industry.

You don't have to go in this order. Follow the conversation organically. By asking about free time you can avoid what might be an uncomfortable subject about family. If it is not brought up by them you can move past.

The second part of the session was how to become a good storyteller by telling your own story. Your stories help you share your thoughts. In order to become a good story teller you need to get out of your head and be your authentic self.

1) You have to earn the right to speak – your experiences and expertise gives you the right to speak.
2) Be passionate or excited about the subject matter.
3) Be eager to communicate your ideas and feelings.

Time to tell your own story. Here is your chance to introduce yourself. You may not have long to speak be concise and keep it at two minutes. Take us right into the action. Tell us how the story unfolds and how the situation ends. Give us the takeaway. Start your story "There I was…

Friday's luncheon was the installation and recognition ceremony. First up were the awards for the contests that were run this year. Our own Brenda Trejo won the Emerging Professionals Contest. This was followed by the installation of the new National Board with Lauline Mitchell of the San Francisco Chapter as our new National President. I look forward to her upcoming year with her vision of Many Paths One Mission. She also has a goal of doubling the membership to 10,000.

The afternoon session I attended was Emotional Intelligence by Stevie Dawn Carter. Emotional intelligence is learned. Emotions are filters in life. When emotions are high listening is low. There are three aspects to be aware of for emotional intelligence. They are awareness, clarity and timing.

Awareness - Know that emotions impact us both positively and negatively. When you are in a negative state you need to pump yourself up. Find what makes you happy. If you are unhappy you may unload on others. Identify your triggers. When you know your emotions they don't get ahead of you. You need to be present not thinking or doing something else. Humans deserve time over machines. Put away cell phone and turn off your computer screen. Full attention to the person in front of you. Also be aware that email is written in the emotion of the writer not the reader.

Clarity – ask questions not defensively just about clarification. Too much emotion you might not get the answer. Seek to understand interpretation. We don't see things the same need to ask for their interpretation. Less chance of a misunderstanding when you ask "How do you feel, interpret…. Remove emotional expectations. What I think or feel may not be the same for them. Their response is as important as yours.

Emotional stamps are all the info about what happened and it is your baggage not theirs. When you don't talk about issues you collect emotional stamps often unloading on others unexpectedly for old issues. How to get rid of emotional stamps. Have a conversation the sooner the better. If you cannot talk to them then write down the name and all things "stamps". When you are done ball up the paper and throw away or burn the page. If you don't get rid of stamps when you talk you are affected by the stamps.

Timing - Stop stamp collecting. For every minute you feel something you need one minute to pass through. If you have a fifteen minute conversation you need fifteen minutes to recover. You need to allow that recovery time. Never have an emotional conversation on a Friday as there is no recovery time and the person will dwell all weekend on the issue. Consider time of conversation, place of conversation. You can't listen and process when emotions are high. You need to consider outcomes over desires. You are better at communicating when you focus on the outcome for them and not you.

The evening ended with the Gala Banquet followed by music and dancing. The theme was sports related and you were asked to wear your favorite team jersey. Along with the music there were games.

The conference ended on a strong note with the Closing Keynote Speaker Avery Bang. Avery is the past president of the non-profit Bridges to Prosperity. She found that a sense of purpose can lead to your passion or your passion to a purpose. You need to get involved with your passion and purpose to get things solved. Avery's passion was to solve rural isolation. By joining Bridges to Prosperity as an engineer she helped build foot bridges in rural areas in other countries. This allowed people to cross rivers to attend school and to work. This allowed the children to continue their education and people to work and bring in more income to support their families. By creating more income it led to creating more equity between the people of the region. Using your passion or purpose can led to more interest in local or world issues thus to help create equity.

I enjoyed the conference and I look forward to using some of the techniques that I learned. I can't wait for next year's annual conference as it will be in Portland Oregon.