

## So long! For now...

I am wrapping up 26 years as IPPS Eastern Region Executive Secretary-Treasurer this month and preparing to step into the next chapter of my life. While this is my official “goodbye” letter, I look forward to seeing you in person at a future IPPS-ER conference for an elbow bump, a handshake or maybe even an actual hug. I won’t be tethered to the registration desk and will enjoy catching up with you on a tour bus or during coffee break. In addition, my husband Mark has agreed to be local site committee chair for the 2022 annual conference to be held here on Long Island. You can bet I will be donning my IPPS cap again for that one!

There has been much to love about this position but I most value the connections made with the people I have been privileged to work alongside. It is strange to say that my colleagues and co-workers are people I see maybe once or twice a year. But many of you have become friends as well over the years, people I am better for knowing. As we have emailed, called, texted, and travelled together we have become familiar with each other’s families and a bit of each other’s stories.

I have seen significant changes not only to IPPS but also to the industry during my tenure. What has not changed is the dedication to IPPS-ER that I have witnessed from the volunteers who make this organization tick. These are people who do not lack for things to do. They tend to be the busiest and most successful in the business. And they make time for IPPS. Why? Because they have a clear understanding of the value the Society has held for them and a vision of seeing others benefit as they have. Sound corny? It may be, but from where I sit, it is spot-on.

Why else would someone put their time, effort, and skill into organizing the countless details involved in planning a four-day annual conference? Why would they make dues renewal reminder calls, review research grant proposals, or plan an IPPS-ER Area Meeting when they have 100 other things on their “to-do” list? Why would someone attend a two-day marathon board meeting to brainstorm ideas for the betterment of the Society, wade through financial reports, schedule future conferences and find a way to support student members? Because they see the value in IPPS, have benefitted from being a member and are willing to turn their appreciation into action.

Ask a long term IPPS member and they will tell you exactly which IPPS meeting was their first, who they attended with and the lasting impact it has had on them and their career. They will likely have a funny story to add about touring in a snowstorm, a Question Box dispute, or an epic auction bidding showdown. They will tell you about an idea they picked up on a tour that saved them thousands of dollars when implemented at their own business. They know exactly what IPPS has meant to them; a concept we should endeavor to convey to our newer members and potential members going forward.

Thanks for the challenges, for the laughs, for the trust you placed in me. Thank you to my husband, Mark, who brought home the position announcement in the fall of 1994 and has been my faithful, unsung IPPS-ER behind-the-scenes assistant for the entire journey. I am eternally grateful. And thank you to the many dedicated volunteers it has been my pleasure to work with who have given of their time and efforts to further the cause of the IPPS-ER. I hope you will stay in touch: [margot.bridgen@gmail.com](mailto:margot.bridgen@gmail.com). I look forward to a bright future personally and for the IPPS Eastern Region!

*Margot officially retires June 30<sup>th</sup> but will be assisting in the transition to her replacement as needed.*