

Professionally Speaking



News and Information for Members of

The Professional Group

33 Years of Women Making a Difference in Business and the Community

"Building Connections That Matter"

1982-2015

The purpose of The Professional Group is to provide women of diverse professions with opportunities for building relationships and networks of personal and business associations through informative monthly presentations, professional development programs, educational and social activities, and philanthropic endeavors.

February 2015

BREAKFAST MEETING

Tuesday, February 3, 2015

PRESENTING GUEST SPEAKER:

DICK HUDGINS

LIFETIME VICE PRESIDENT

HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™

"LET'S RODEO, HOUSTON! WHAT'S NEW?"



Our February speaker is Dick Hudgins. He and his wife Cheryl reside in Fort Bend County. Dick graduated from Wharton High School, attended Wharton County Junior College, and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics from Texas A&M University. Dick is an instrument rated private pilot and an advanced open water scuba diver.

Professionally, Dick is a real estate appraiser and broker with Hudgins-Groover Real Estate in Wharton, Texas. He holds the MAI appraisal designation through the Appraisal Institute and appraises and brokers property throughout the state of Texas.

Dick is the Immediate Past President of the Rotary Club of Wharton. In addition, his community service has included serving as a Wharton City Councilman, chairman of the Wharton Planning Commission, and as the Wharton County representative on the Airport Advisory Board of the Houston-Galveston Area Council. He is a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians and the Sons of the American Revolution. Dick is also a life member of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

See Guest Speaker, continued on page 3

Meetings are held at **The Junior League, 1811 Briar Oaks**, on the **first Tuesday of each month** except as otherwise scheduled. Join us for a breakfast buffet and conversation at **6:45 a.m.** Free parking is available in the attached garage. As a courtesy to our speaker and others in the audience if you have to leave early, please sit at a table in the back of the room during the breakfast meeting. *Professionally Speaking* is distributed monthly by The Professional Group for its members and current guests. All submissions to the TPG Newsletter need to be sent in a Word document to Carol Gradziel, VP/Newsletter, swkeystone@aol.com by the due date. Please mention TPG in subject line. The *deadline* for submission of articles and advertising for the *March 2015 newsletter* is at 5:00 p.m. on *Thursday, February 5, 2015.* *Professionally Speaking* is designed and published monthly by Vicki S. Henrichs of Henrichs Publishing. Contact vicki164@yahoo.com Visit the site www.letterwise.net

President's Message

Dear TPG Friends,

Happiest of New Years to you! I hope that 2015 has started off well for you and that your fondest hopes and dreams will be realized this year.

There's nothing like the beginning of the year to make us want to change some of our habits, leave the old and unworkable behind and adopt better, more effective behaviors to make us happier, healthier and more effective in our endeavors. There's so much buzz going on about setting goals, making resolutions, and how to keep them and make them really work for us. One thing we all know for sure is that we must write them down.

I recently had the opportunity to spend a day with the new TPG Board of Directors at our annual retreat. We talked about our focus for the organization for the year ahead. We spent a lot of time reflecting on the results of the Membership Survey. Julie Barry has summarized the responses, and the article appears later in this newsletter. In addition to reflecting on the survey responses, we discussed the future of our wonderful organization and determined our focus for this year. After lots of brainstorming, we reached consensus that our theme for 2015 is:

"BUILDING CONNECTIONS THAT MATTER".

Each word was carefully chosen. We hope you like it as much as we do, and we hope you'll take it to heart as you participate in TPG this year. We also wrote down our resolutions for 2015.

- 1. Use the TPG website! And update your profile. It may not matter that much to you, but other members would like to be able to put a name with a face.*
- 2. Add a headshot! If you don't have one, our own Nikky LaWell will be here to take one for you before or after the February meeting. Please mark your calendar and take advantage of your free photo session! She will be set up by 6:30 a.m.*
- 3. Bring a guest. The only way we can grow our membership is to introduce others to TPG.*
- 4. Sign up for a committee. The more participation we have, the better it is for everyone.*
- 5. Become an active member of that committee. ...with as much time and energy you can spare.*
- 6. Try something new. Just do something you haven't done before.*
- 7. Get involved. See #5.*
- 8. Discover the gifts & talents you didn't know you had. You might surprise yourself!*
- 9. Build a new connection, make a new friend. Back to basics!*

We came up with 9 10 might be better; important lists always have 10, don't they?!

- 10. _____. You tell us. I'd love to hear from you, so please send me your idea for a TPG resolution. Just email me at: Martha@martharaymond.com.*

Warm regards,

Martha Raymond
2015 President



The Professional Group 2015 Board of Directors

President	Martha Raymond	Martha@martharaymond.com
Executive Vice President	Julie Barry	jbarry@juliebarrylaw.com
VP Education	Teresa Doyle	Teresa.Doyle@comcast.net
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VP Special Projects	Dawn Sabo	Dawn.Sabo@saboaccounting.com
Recording Secretary	Rhonda Parker	Rhonda@ColbyResources.com
Ex-Officio/Nominating	Sue Howard	sue_howard@sbcglobal.net

Guest Speaker, continued from page 1

Today, Dick is here representing the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. He is a Lifetime Vice President of the Show, serves on the Board of Directors, is past chairman of the Speakers Committee, past chairman of the Armed Forces Appreciation Committee, and is now serving his 42nd year as a committeeman with the Show.

Each of the 18 sitting vice presidents of the Show is the officer-in-charge of several of the more than 100 committees which make up the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. While serving as a vice president from 2005 to 2008, Dick was the officer-in-charge of eight committees: Speakers, Black Heritage, Houston General Go Texan, Rodeo Operations, the three Calf Scramble Committees (Arena, Donors, and Greeters), and Houston Metro Go Texan and its 24 sub-committees.

Dick's interest in the Houston Livestock Show began at an early age, since he grew up in a "rodeo" family. He began barrel racing at the age of 5 and at 10 started calf roping.

Dick was also a 4-H and FFA member. While in FFA, he served as a State Vice President, earned the American Farmer Degree, and was the Texas nominee for National Office.

Please join us to hear Mr. Hudgins' presentation on Tuesday, February 3!



Members On The Move!!!!

TPG Sisters,

After many years of vacationing in the beautiful state of Colorado, Warren and I decided to make it home. We kept saying we would do this “someday” and wanted to make the move while we are still healthy enough to take advantage of the many things we enjoy about Colorado — hiking, fishing and cool weather — to name a few. A few years ago we began looking at homes on our vacation trips. This year we found a home that caused us to say “now is the time to do this!”



Long story short, we made a contingency offer (since our home in Houston wasn't even on the market), came back to Houston and met with our TPG realtor, Betty Bellomy, to begin the process. Our home in Houston sold the first day it was available for showings. Thanks, Betty! Needless to say, we had to put everything into high gear, which we did. We made the move, and are settling into our new home, which has a beautiful view of Pike's Peak during the day and the city lights at night. I hope to see many of my TPG sisters for a visit. We have plenty of space, and would welcome having you here. Our new address is now updated in the TPG directory.

I will continue to do business in Houston, and will attend as many TPG functions as I can on those visits.

This photo is a view of Pike's Peak from the front of our house

Warm Regards,

Dinah Wright

Kristina Kilgore Mullen and husband, **Zac Mullen**, have been blessed with a baby girl, **Evelyn Grace Mullen**. Evelyn Grace was born on Thanksgiving, November 27, 2014 at 8:05 p.m. Evelyn Grace was 22 ½ inches long and 9 pounds and 15.4 ounces! Welcome to our future TPG-er!!



New job, new address, new husband, new outlook on life.....If you have news about yourself, your family, or your company, we would love to share it in the newsletter. Maybe you've recently received an award or been accepted to head a project; maybe you've had a grandchild or taken a fabulous trip. We want to get to know you better! Email **Carol Gradziel** at swkeystone@aol.com to be included in the March newsletter!



COMMITTEE NEWS



We kicked off the new year hearing about the bright future of Houston as presented by Bob Eury, President of Central Houston, Inc.

From left: Kathleen Fenninger, Bob Eury and Martha Raymond

FROM JESSICA RODRIGUEZ AND THE NETWORKING COMMITTEE:

**The answer to the question:
What is networking anyway??**

Networking encompasses more than a business card exchange or bragging about yourself to people you do not or barely know. Networking is building relationships with others based on trust that involves both giving and taking. Networking involves teaching others about who you are and what type of opportunities are of interest to you. It also entails listening to others that you are able to help achieve their goals. You should NOT wait to network until after a crisis and stop networking after getting “the” job. Networking does not only help in getting a job, but can also help grow your business and/or career. Once you begin to grow your network, that network should be nurtured as a friendship relationship is nurtured.

Have a clear goal in mind when you network. Identify what the end result should be — finding a job, changing jobs, growing professionally, finding a mentor, etc. Networking involves having a plan, getting to know people well and following up with those contacts. Personal networking is one of the most effective ways of expanding your contacts. While social media, Facebook, Plaxo or LinkedIn, provide a great networking platform, face to face networking is much more effective. Participate, Participate, And Participate! Join a committee and/or attend any event to meet other members and guests. You never know where the next business opportunity will come from!

The Networking Committee will be working towards planning networking events that foster Building Connections that Matter. If you are interested in becoming involved in the Networking Committee, contact **Jessica J. Rodriguez** via email at jessicajrodriguez@gmail.com or at 832.528.1007.



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COMMITTEE NEWS—CONTINUED

From Anne Swanson,

VP Member Communications:

Navigating the TPG website, with ease!

The TPG website uses an online tool built by Club Express. This system has been designed specifically for clubs and organizations and their very specific needs and works very well for our organization.

In the next year, we will be migrating the website, so it is mobile-friendly. The look will not change significantly, but the ability to view on your Smartphone will be much improved! (When this change occurs, we will let you know in Monday Announcements.)

Please make it one of your goals in the new year to update your online profile. This gives all of us a chance to know you better. Our theme this year is “Building Connections That Matter”, and this will help us learn more about you.

To update your own profile:

- Login to the TPG website.
- Select “Profile” at the upper right of your screen.
- Check or update the items under the “Personal Info” block.
- You may even add links to your Social Media pages in the “Membership Directory” section.

If you haven’t uploaded your picture, add one. We’d love to see your face! If you don’t have a photo, make sure you come EARLY to our February meeting, where member **Nikky LaWell** will be taking our photos. Thank you to Nikky for providing this service to us! You can upload your photo in the “Membership Directory” section (at the very bottom).

If you’d like to know more about other members, select the “Member Directory” from the menu at the left. Click on the member’s picture to view their full profile.

If you need help, I’m just a phone call away. I’ll be happy to help you. Contact **Anne Swanson** at anne@anneswansondesign.com or call me at 713-398-1912.



anne@anneswansondesign.com



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MORE COMMITTEE NEWS

**From the Making a Difference (MAD) Committee,
headed by Mary Fairbrother:**

KIPP Sharpstown College Prep programs:

TPGers **Donna Howell-DePew, Cindy Jennings, Martha Raymond** and **Pam Longley** have been working with twenty 8th grade girls at KIPP Sharpstown College Prep during the Fall semester, 2014. They meet each Monday afternoon from 4:30-5:30pm. The focus has been on leadership skills, confidence-building and a club project.

The girls divided into two groups, based on their interests: The Fine Artists and The Tekkies. They interviewed teachers and students on video during the semester about what the school needs for the success of several programs as well as thoughts on the future of their school.

The rough cut of the video was presented at the last club meeting before the holiday break where the girls also enjoyed pizza and cupcakes! The final editing will be done by Donna, with assistance from Kathy Fenninger, and the finished product will be shown at a future TPG meeting. The video will be used by KIPP as a fundraiser for the school.

Cindy Jennings remarked that she watched how mesmerized the girls were while watching what they had created. **Donna Howell-Depew** said she believed the club project let the girls see what is possible when one focuses on something outside themselves. **Martha Raymond** was stopped by one of the mothers after the last meeting, who said "Thank you so much! The difference in my daughter is profound."

MAD Committee members working with KIPP:

TPG Reading Mentors: Pam Longley, Cat Webster and Jessica Rodriguez.

United Dreamcatchers Leadership Club for Girls: Donna Howell-DePew, Cindy Jennings, Martha Raymond and Pam Longley.

MAD is recruiting additional mentors for 2015.
If you're interested, contact Pam Longley,
713-822-8234 or PLongley@OldRepublicTitle.com
or Mary Fairbrother.

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Some Insights from the 2014 TPG Member Survey

From Julie Barry

Many thanks to all who took the time to complete the member survey. We had 45 members who contributed their thoughts. TPG leadership reads every single survey answer and discusses the results at our annual Board retreat. We take your input very seriously, and we hope more members will choose to participate in the future.

An overwhelming number of respondents agreed that they are extremely satisfied with our meeting facilities at the Junior League. Yes, we know it is cold at the Junior League (we can't fix that), and yes we know the toast is always cold. But all in all, they do a very nice job for us! Another area that received a lot of positive feedback was the table topics networking time. Many people see this as one of their favorite parts of the meeting. It's an opportunity to meet and visit with fellow members as we address a question that relates to the current speaker's topic. We continue to get favorable feedback on the speakers, although some would like to see more compelling topics and more women speakers.

In terms of the activities we offered this year, we received several comments asking that we keep the price of attendance lower. In terms of the Retreat that we did not have, the response was split down the middle. Half of those surveyed said they did not miss the Retreat, the other half did. Amongst those who missed the retreat, many said they felt that a one day Retreat would be better attended and more cost effective.

As many of you know, this year the membership committee tried something new with a monthly happy hour to encourage members to bring guests and network within a smaller group setting. Of the 45 survey takers, only 10 participated in one or more happy hour event, and only one person brought a guest. We are going to continue with the happy hours this year in hopes they catch on. We hope you will attend, and we encourage you to bring guests.

Finally, without a doubt, the most valuable thing TPG members feel they receive from the organization is the long lasting friendships they make through the organization. We hope all of you will continue to stay active and dynamic members of TPG this year and help us grow this diverse and energetic community of women.

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January 2015 Star Pin Award

By **TRISH STRANGMEYER-FELT**

Thank you so much, Sarah Ward, for honoring me with the coveted Star Pin in December! I enjoyed wearing it and thought it was especially perfect to have to wear during the holidays! I appreciate your friendship and kindness to me and also your monthly reminder regarding “taking care of personal business”.

The person I have selected to receive the Star Pin for January is someone I admire. I do not know her well, yet, but I do consider her to be brave, because she is willing to take on something she doesn't know a lot about. I've only sat at a breakfast table with her once in the past year and enjoyed sharing with her and I know I will get to know her better as 2015 moves along. She has agreed to take over an important committee in TPG which makes her a star in my book!



Trish Strangmeyer-Felt, left, with Star Pin recipient Mary Fairbrother at the January meeting.

*I'd like to present the January Star Pin to our new VP of Making A Difference – **MARY FAIRBROTHER!***

From The Board:



Thanks to everyone who completed the TPG 2014 survey. The results were compiled and formed the basis of our Board Retreat held all day on January 3. See the survey results in this issue on page 8. As promised, everyone who completed the survey was entered into a drawing for a **FREE TPG MEMBERSHIP!** The winner was **Corine Prieto**, President of Integrated Geophysics Corp. and member since 2003.

MEMBER PHOTOS!

In February, member **Nikky Lawell** will be set up to take photos of all members who need one or who would like to update their existing picture.

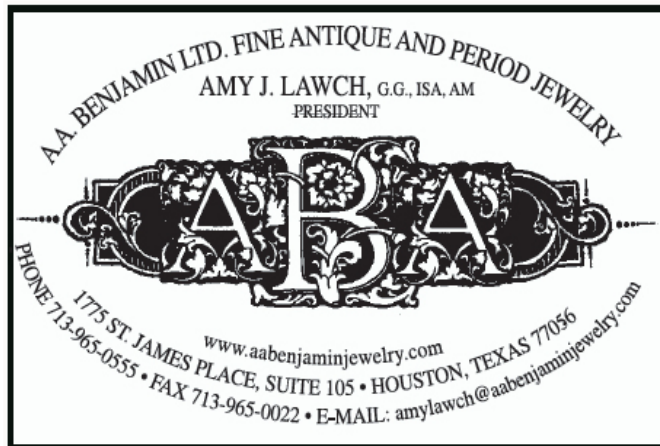
The Board picture will be taken at 6:30, and after that (about 6:40), Nikky will take headshots of the members. Come early to get a good place in line!



Upcoming events to put on your calendar:

Some upcoming speakers:

- March—Kandace Stolze, President of the Orthopedic Stem Cell Institute
- May—Patricia Villafranca, FBI Agent
- June—Devon Anderson, Harris County District Attorney
- September—Judge Robert Echols, Former County Judge of Harris County
- November—Brock Wagner, Founder of St. Arnold's Brewery



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Happy February Birthdays to TPG Members



Kim Kelley	February 1
Debbie Woods	February 2
Cheryl Watkins	February 4
Jane Luco	February 10
Gale Evans	February 11
Norma Garza	February 12
Margaret Harrison	February 15
Carol Stryker	February 16
Joellen Snow	February 16
Sarah Ward	February 21
Carla Vigilante	February 23
Beryl Kaminsky	February 27

Advertising in the TPG Newsletter

Interested in advertising your business or services to fellow TPG members? There is space available for advertising in our monthly newsletter!

Advertise your business for the low cost of \$25 a month or reduce the cost further by paying \$125, in advance, for six months of advertising.

The standard ad size is that of a business card. At no additional cost you may include a link to your website which will be printed below your business card ad. Not only are you able to network with fellow TPG members, your advertising dollars help to defray the cost of our newsletter and website.

If you are interested in exploring an ad in the monthly TPG Newsletter, please email:

CAROL GRADZIEL, swkeystone@aol.com

A Message from the TPG Caring and Concerns Committee

The Co-Chairs for the Caring and
Concerns Committee are
**JULIE BARRY AND
JESSICA RODRIGUEZ.**

They can be reached by email at
tpgcaring@yahoo.com (checked daily)
or by calling Jessica at 832-528-1007.

If you need assistance,
or if you know a member who may have a
need, please let them know.



Breakfast Reservation Form — Tuesday, February 3, 2015

Coffee and Networking at 6:45 a.m. Buffet served promptly at 7:00 a.m.

Register for the breakfast online at www.tpghouston.org by **WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2015** to receive the lowest price. The process is easy and very user friendly!

BREAKFAST BUFFET: *Choose from a variety of hot and cold breakfast items.*

Member fees: \$25. Or \$30 on Thursday, January 29, 2015.

Guest fees: \$30. Or \$35 on Thursday, January 29, 2015.

It is our policy that reservations for our monthly breakfast meeting be made no later than the Thursday before each meeting, to guarantee attendance to the Junior League early on Friday morning. Reservations must be received by the deadline. If you make a reservation through the website, you will receive an email confirmation of your reservation from Club Express, then you will receive a second e-mail with confirmation of your online payment. **If you do not receive two confirmations when you have registered online, please contact Sandra Crook at Sandra@GreymarkConstruction.com** You owe the fee for the breakfast even if you do not attend.

Club Express Tip: If you don't see the "Register" box, scroll to the right, or scroll down. If you cannot remember if you have registered, click on the box: "Registrants" on the event page and you can see all those who are registered. Also, be sure you are looking at the FEBRUARY calendar.

Club Express Tip: If you have trouble, change your browser. Close out and open Mozilla Firefox rather than Internet Explorer.

NOTE: Online reservations end at midnight on **THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 2015.**

If you are paying by CHECK, your reservation and check must be mailed and postmarked by FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2015. Please mail your check rather than bring it to the door. Make checks payable to The Professional Group. Your cancelled check is your receipt. CASH IS NOT ACCEPTED. Reservations are not transferable to another member. Reservations are not accepted by telephone.

No reservation will be accepted after midnight, **THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 2015** without approval of the Meeting Coordinator, on a space available basis. To request approval after this deadline, e-mail Sandra@GreymarkConstruction.com **A late fee of \$10.00 will be added to the base cost, IF space is available, and IF the reservation is accepted.**

Reservation forms and checks should be mailed to:

TJ Jeter-McAvoy, TPG VP Finance

13711 Dempley Drive

Houston, TX 77041

Member/Sponsor _____

Amount enclosed \$ _____

The Professional Group

"Building Connections That Matter"

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