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Accounting, Interfacing ... and Parking

If you are interested only in keeping your gates going up and down and in issuing tickets and collecting money at your cashier terminal or pay-on-foot, stop right now. Read no further. This article is about accounting, bookkeeping, a general ledger and interfacing -- and the parking business.

Ruth Beaman and Kyle Cashion cut their teeth on the parking business. Having worked for Central, the largest parking company on Earth, they learned the business from the inside out. Ruth ran garages; Kyle, as Central's IT head, ran computers. They believed there was a disconnect between the hardware and software that was being supplied by most of the parking equipment manufacturers and the accounting and bookkeeping reporting requirements of the parking operators and owners.

After they left Central, they decided to create an accounts receivable software program for the parking business, but realized even before they started that the program had to be more than just that. It had to include all the needs of the parking operation and it had to be interfaced with the system that actually ran the cards (or as they call it, credential) and the cashier system that collected the daily monies.

"You have to remember," says Cashion, "if you don't connect the accounting with the actual system that turns the cards on and off, you could easily have cards being used that aren't being paid. The two systems must be interlocked. We took the approach that the interface, as far as the user was concerned, goes only one way. They enter data into our system, and then the accounting system tells the card access system (Federal, McGann, Scheidt & Bachmann, Skidata and CTR, at this point) what to do."

When Central Parking bought Allright, the U.S. Department of Justice was concerned about antitrust and competition issues. It wanted detailed information on garages in 26 cities going back three years. One of Beaman's jobs was to get that information, including rates, average ticket prices, length of stay, and the like.

Beaman tells the story that she spent weeks in storerooms, with "little four-legged critters" running across her feet, digging out the information. "I never want to go through that again," she says. "That experience taught me that all the historical data had to be easily available, and that's one of the things we emphasize in our system."



Kyle Cashion and Ruth Beaman

"If you approach the problem with two separate systems," adds Beaman, "you will never know, for sure, that cards one system tells you are off are in fact off, and vice versa. I know of a city in the South that has the 'separate system' approach. They reissue all their monthly cards every year simply to be sure that all are paid. That's a lot of work."

Beaman and Cashion have developed their software based on personal experience in the parking business. Beaman's accounting background and Cashion's technical programming abilities dovetailed well together.

Their goal was to produce a system that handled all aspects of the parking business, but focusing on reporting and accounting. "They interface directly into a company's general ledger. It means that reports can be in terms that the asset manager or auditor is familiar with, and that the accountant's general ledger is automatically updated with the same data," says Bea Vela, head auditor for The Parking Network. "The goal has to be to make the job of the auditor, the asset manager and the owner as easy as possible."

"We spend a lot of time on the interface between the user and the computer," says Cashion. "It's important to make the system intuitive and as simple as possible to operate. Most line parking staff aren't technically oriented. They need a system that they can use easily. That's one other reason we take over the programming of the revenue control system. Data need to be entered only once. Then we populate the other systems automatically. Potential for data entry errors are cut in half."

It's been an exciting ride for the two entrepreneurs over the five-year life of the company. They have installed nearly 2,000 systems, and according to Beaman, that is going to increase 20% by the first of the year.

Beaman's enthusiasm about their company and its

Continued on Page 21

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3,000 Fill



Organizers and exhibitors were pleased as nearly 3200 people jammed the Baltimore Convention Center last month for the first combined Intertraffic and Parking Industry Exhibition. This attendance broke all records for a parking/transportation event in the US.

More than 2500 people had pre-registered and nearly 700 signed in at the door to the pleasure of the 225 exhibitors covering the over 100,000 square feet of exhibit space in Center located in Baltimore's famous Inner Harbor.

"The training program did a lot to bring people to the event," said Convention Coordinator Sandra Watson. "We had 50% more sign up for PIE this year than last. It was gratifying." About half of the attendees have a transportation background, she added.

"We were gratified by the support of the exhibitors," said Dawn Newman, Exhibits manager for PIE. "We sold 20% more companies and 40% more floor space than ever before at a PIE event."

"We think the idea of transportation pros being at the show is great," said Larry Feuer of McGann Software. "After all, they are deeply involved in the transportation infrastructure and parking is a large part of that, plus in many smaller cities, transportation and parking are in the same department. This combination is a perfect mix."

Most exhibitors thought the combining of the two shows was a grand success. "We truly like the idea of only coming to one event," commented Tom Wunk of Scheidt and Bachmann. "Now the major parking organizations need to take the next step."

There were over 100 seminars and training sessions during the three day event. The sessions were spaced so attendees had plenty of time to visit the exhibit floor.

Highlighting Intertraffic/PIE was a presentation on Don Shoup's new book, "The High Cost of Free Parking." UCLA PhD candidate, Michael Manville, took the audience through

the theories behind Shoup's concept that free or subsidized parking has been the bane of urban planning for the past half century.

Other seminars included Pay and Display, Pay on Foot, parking technology, smart cards, garage maintenance, data, auditing, personnel selection, rate setting, roundtables, operator selection, outsourcing, and customer service.

The event was preceded by two programs, the traditional boot camp for newcomers, and this year, a four hour session for senior managers on funding, buying, and selling garages. Two advanced, day long sessions were provided covering on street and off street parking.

Attendees were treated to three tours in the Baltimore area covering parking in the city, the University of Baltimore, and Baltimore/Washington International Airport. Peter Little and Pete Collier of the Parking Authority of Baltimore City lead the city tour, Robert Milner headed the UMB trek, and Richard Keen of BWI and representatives from PMI, the airport's parking operator headed the BWI tour. More than 100 people were involved in each event.

Intertraffic/PIE

By John Van Horn

The combined Intertraffic/PIE event came about when John Van Horn, founder of PIE, met with Intertraffic Representatives in Amsterdam last April. The idea of combining the two shows was born and, along with

the American Road and Transportation Builders Association the event was promoted and produced.

The RAI is an internationally known organizer of trade shows. In addition to the biannual Intertraffic show in Amsterdam that draws over 25,000 people, the company produces such events in Singapore, Bangkok, Shanghai, Istanbul and South America.

The next PIE show will be in Chicago in August, 2006. PIE will combine again with Intertraffic in 2007.

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VIPs and M

It's not often that a new technology in a parking facility can satisfy the landlord, the business owner, high-profile daytime visitors, and a nightly surge of shoppers and movie patrons. But David Vaillant, President of Lincoln Center Parking, says his facility in Miami Beach, FL, has achieved just that.

A six-story, 300-space parking garage, Lincoln Center must reserve eight ground-floor spaces for daytime VIPs. The reason: It's stipulated in the lease. But to achieve cost-efficiency, the same spaces must be available evenings to regular customers.

Lincoln Center is in a flourishing retail neighborhood, at the intersection of the city's Lincoln Road and a state thoroughfare, Alton Road. Both carry high volumes of traffic. So demand for parking space is continual because of the diversity of nearby retail establishments and the presence of the Regal Cinema, a popular 18-screen movie theater.

Dual usage of the eight spaces has been achieved by the installation of remote-controlled space barriers, which are lowered and raised by a hand-held transmitter in the user's vehicle or controlled from a central location.

Regulating Usage

"I needed the more flexible system," Vaillant says. "The landlord wants guaranteed parking for the building manager, contractors and others who conduct business with the garage. But I want to regulate the use of the protected space. So visitors who may qualify pass by our ground-floor office, and we operate the barriers from there." The central office attendant acknowledges any driver who is entitled to a protected space and lowers one of the barriers.

PT Celebrates 100th Issue

With the October 2005 edition, *Parking Today* celebrates its 100th issue and leads up to its 10th anniversary this coming April.

"We are very pleased to still be here after nearly a decade of service to the parking industry, said PT Founder, editor, and publisher, John Van Horn. "A few of us were confident of success when we put out the first edition back in April of 1996. Most told us we would never see a second issue. We passed out the first issue at the IPI show in Chicago. The head of the IPI at the time, David Ivey, wasn't too sure about letting us put them about, so some friends stashed them in the Ladies Restroom. Before too long, everyone in the place was carrying a PT. The rest is history."

More tales of the first 10 years will be coming throughout 2006, with stories of threats, lawsuits, accusations, failures, successes and just how it became the leading publication in an industry.

Movie Fans Share Spaces

By William Portington

Another unusual feature at Lincoln Center Parking is its elimination of the traditional manned exit booth. "We use a system that's popular in Europe," says Vaillant, a native of France. When a driver enters the parking facility, a dispensing machine issues a ticket indicating day, date and time -- an action that automatically opens a gate.

When a driver returns to the facility, he inserts his ticket into a pay-on-foot machine in the lobby, which indicates the amount owed. On payment, the now sensitized ticket will open the exit gate when put into a card reader next to it.

Vaillant says this method "frees one employee who would otherwise be manning a booth, and it lets all of the employees on duty function in a customer-service capacity."

The high-visibility barriers were installed in April 2005. "We used an outside contractor," he says, "but they're easy to bolt to the floor, and they don't require digging or wiring."

Units Are Self-Contained

Dori Teich, President of Designated Parking Corp., manufacturer of the barriers, says that "the Lincoln Center installation is among numerous uses for our product. You'll find them at office buildings, public facilities and residential buildings, where tenants are often willing to pay a park-

ing fee premium for a barrier-protected space." Teich says the barriers are self-contained in a low-profile, sealed-aluminum housing, which is resistant to excessive force, vandalism or other abuse.

Vaillant says Lincoln Center Parking, which employs seven, and is open around the clock, is mid-range in terms of capacity. "A city-operated lot might accommodate 1,500 cars," he notes, "while some privately owned lots can accept only 50." He says that parking rates charged by his facility, which was purchased in 1998, are comparable to those charged by hotels and valet parking operations.

It would be difficult to lower his rates, Vaillant says ruefully, because the parking garage's location commands a high lease rate that is reflected in the charges for parking space.

Have there been any problems with the barriers? Vaillant laughs.

"No, not really," he says. "The only real difficulty we encounter is caused by low-slung sports cars like Ferraris. They're so close to the ground that they can cause cosmetic damage to the barriers. But Designated Parking is providing a solution," he adds.

Are there any problems you would consider typical of the parking business?

Vaillant laughs again. "Well, yes, there is one. To put it bluntly, it's customers who want to dispute the length of time they've parked or the amount they should be charged, even though the ticket spells these things out quite clearly. I've even had a few crash through the front gates.

"But I guess it goes with the territory," he adds. "I doubt if there's a lot of garage operator anywhere that hasn't been challenged by an irate customer."

The MySpot 2000 barriers are manufactured by Designated Parking, and the entrance and POF equipment by Designa. William Portington is head of Studio 21, a public relations agency. He can be reached at Studio21adv@nac.net.

PT



Spaces are reserved at Lincoln Center in Miami Beach.

NPA Goes to Miami Beach

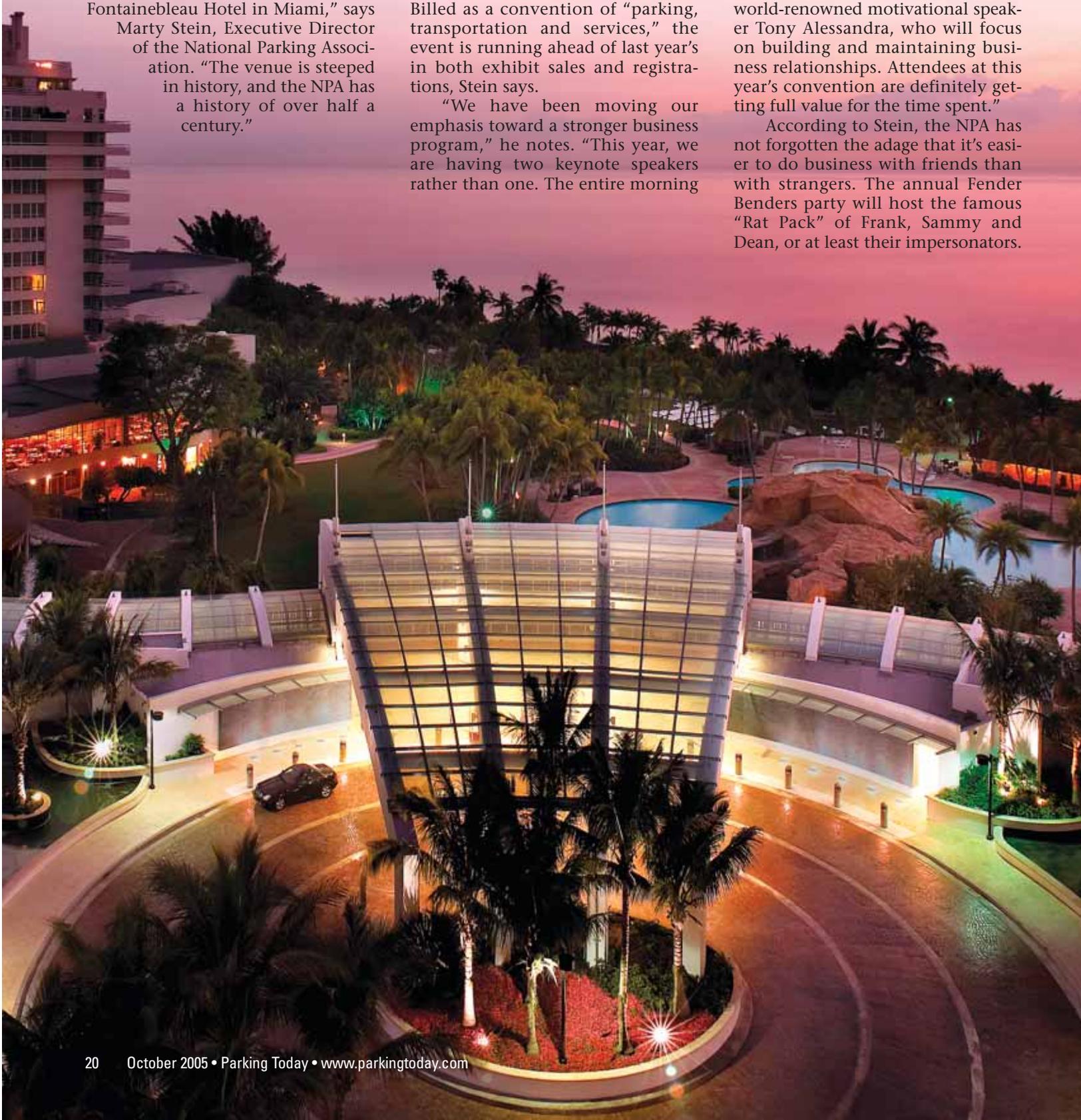
“It’s appropriate that we are holding the NPA’s 54th annual Parking, Transportation and Services Convention & Exposition at the historic Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami,” says Marty Stein, Executive Director of the National Parking Association. “The venue is steeped in history, and the NPA has a history of over half a century.”

The National Parking Association will be celebrating that history, along with the business of parking, at its annual convention Oct. 16-19 at the famous hotel in Miami Beach. Billed as a convention of “parking, transportation and services,” the event is running ahead of last year’s in both exhibit sales and registrations, Stein says.

“We have been moving our emphasis toward a stronger business program,” he notes. “This year, we are having two keynote speakers rather than one. The entire morning

of the first day is devoted to Frank Abagnale, subject of the movie “Catch Me If You Can,” who is speaking on fraud detection and prevention. Day two is kicked off with world-renowned motivational speaker Tony Alessandra, who will focus on building and maintaining business relationships. Attendees at this year’s convention are definitely getting full value for the time spent.”

According to Stein, the NPA has not forgotten the adage that it’s easier to do business with friends than with strangers. The annual Fender Benders party will host the famous “Rat Pack” of Frank, Sammy and Dean, or at least their impersonators.





Plus, there will be mixers in the exhibit hall, a golf tourney, and plenty of networking time. The convention will wind up with a "party with a purpose" that is themed to fit the location of the association's 2006 Winter Board meeting in St. Kitts in the Caribbean.

The NPA has organized its conference so that one day focuses on front-line managers. Operations managers can attend that day on a special rate and take in the exhibition, and have business sessions designed to their particular needs. "That was one of our most successful days last year in Los Angeles," Stein says. "Our members bring their ops folks and really benefit from the program."

One special presentation at this year's convention will be the presentation of a special paper on Parking Taxes by Stephen S. Fuller, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Regional Analysis, School of Public Policy, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. This session will cover parking taxes, their nature, justification, incidence and impact on the economy, including retail and office markets, as well as their competitive disadvantages. The report stresses that excessive taxation can be disastrous to the business community and the health of the municipality it is attempting to serve.

The NPA is inviting the industry to attend its annual convention. "After all," says Stein, "who doesn't want to be in Miami Beach toward the end of October?" To learn more about NPA 2005 and to register, please call or contact Pat Langfeld, NPA Show Manager, at (800) 647-7275 or plangfeld@npapark.org or visit www.npapark.org.

PT

Accounting, Interfacing ... and Parking

from Page 14

product is infectious. She can rattle off features and benefits for hours. "Although we think we have all bases covered, it's usually the little things that can make a system attractive to a customer.

"For instance, we can automatically block cards that are not paid on time," she says. "When this is done, the system records it in the account history, so when an irate parker calls, the user can see immediately that they were blocked for non-payment. The user also can produce a report before the cards are turned off, showing who will be blocked, so they can try to get the payment."

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John Van Horn is editor of Parking Today – He can be reached at editor@parkingtoday.com

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DEA

Time Flies V

Time flies when you are having fun, and, boy, have I been having fun. The last 40 years went by in a flash. It's a new century. L.A. has grown, and my business is booming. Wow! With Shirley running the office and Jim Walsh coming over from the Bel Air Patrol, we were able to build a reputation. And a good one.

Yes, I did it, I married Shirley, and Paul Junior came along a year or so later. They tell me he's my spitting image, and I guess he is. He was raised in the detective business, actually helping out on stakeouts, and once, when he was 15, he solved a case all by himself. Talk about a proud poppa.

He's out of the service, having served as a Marine in Desert Storm (well, I guess the jarheads are OK; at least they are now that my son is one), and has come back to work with his dad. Just in time too. All those long nights, lack of exercise and bad diet caught up with me, and the doc said that I had to slow down or die. He's subtle, my doc.

I'm closing in on 70, don't really want to retire, so the timing is perfect. I can keep my fingers in the pie; Junior can do the work, and benefit from the wisdom and experience of age. Maybe Shirley and I can take that cruise we have been putting off since that parking garage caper that really put Paul Manning, Private Investigator, on the map.

I single-handedly -- with Shirley's and Jim's help and, oh yes, there were the LAPD and Bel Air Patrol, but who's counting -- took out a dame who was running the local mob and solved a murder in a parking garage, plus discovered a money-laundering operation. I also discovered that Shirley was my one true love. I think it was her throwing the vase of flowers in my lap while I was chatting up that nurse during my sojourn in the hospital that tipped me off. Or maybe it was the possibility that she might be hurt when she was kidnapped.

The publicity from the parking caper was terrific. I couldn't handle all the calls and asked her to help. She jumped at the chance to keep a closer eye on me and moved into my office a month later. She also told me that if we were going to keep our personal relationship, I had to marry her. Seemed reasonable at the time. And still does.

When You Are Having Fun

By J VH

Business was so good, I couldn't keep up with it, and I asked Jim Walsh to come work for me. He considered it for, oh, 10 seconds and gave Capt. Hankins at Bel Air his notice. We didn't burn any bridges there (I actually got the captain's OK before talking to Jim). That group with all its contacts in the "business" was an invaluable referral.

We moved to new offices on Sunset Boulevard. It is a Spanish-style single-story building with a lot of space. My office has a great view of the strip and the constant parade on the sidewalk outside. I figured that we could rent out some of the space and then grow into it. Being on the Sunset Strip is a good location for getting around town.

We are about 20 minutes from police headquarters downtown, 15 minutes from the Valley (over Laurel Canyon or Beverly Glen), about 20 minutes from the beach cities and a short run down the hill from home. And we didn't have to get on the freeways.

I have seen this city grow from a segregated mess run by the iron fist of the LAPD to being the most diverse and cosmopolitan on earth. The cops are pros now and treat everyone like human beings, sort of. Much of the diversity is Latin, with so-called "Spanish surname" folks, legal and illegal, making up more than half the population. But the Blacks, Koreans, Iranians, Vietnamese, Japanese, Chinese, Jews, Canadians, French and the rest make for an absolutely wonderful mix of cultures and languages. Los Angeles is a bazaar. You can find anything here, get anything here, and if you aren't careful, get into trouble here.

That's where we come in. We help people who are in trouble. And, hopefully, help them out of it. All they have to do is call "Paul Manning and Son, Investigations."

Junior had just finished up a case and was meeting in his office with the client and, I hope, collecting our final check, when Shirley announced that someone was in the outer office to see "Mr. Manning."

"Junior or Senior?" I asked. "Based on the age of the potential client, Junior, but Pauly is busy, so I turned it over to you."

She stepped aside, and the most beautiful woman I have ever seen (except Shirley, of course) walked through the door. She was blonde, perfectly proportioned, maybe 35, and carried herself like a lady. Shirley gave me a look that said, "Hands off, Tiger" and closed the door. It always starts with a blond, doesn't it.

I stood and put out my hand – "Paul Manning." A look of confusion crossed her face. "I ... I ... I ... I'm Grace Lundquist," she stuttered. My unerring detective skills, honed with half a century of experience, told me she was expecting to see my son. "I'm sorry, Mr. Manning," she said. "I just expected someone ... younger."

I laughed and said, "You were expecting to meet my son, Paul." He's busy and I'm to keep you company until he finishes in few minutes. The look of relief on her face didn't do a lot for my ego, but this wasn't the first time that had happened.

At that moment, Paul walked in. He really was a duplicate of me, 35 years ago. Tall, rock solid, handsome and smart. He was definitely his own man, so I had to give him a little jab now and then. "Junior, I would like you to meet Grace Lundquist."

He gave a look that brought back memories of a landlord on that parking case years ago. He didn't like being called Junior, particularly in front of a client.

"Miss Lundquist," he said, shaking her hand and sitting in the empty chair next to hers. "How can we help you?"

"Well, I work in one of those buildings on Olympic Boulevard, just west of the 405," she said. "My office overlooks a parking garage. I can see the roof, and I am certain something 'funny' is going on there. I know you must think I'm crazy, but every day about the same time, two cars come up to the roof -- it's usually completely empty -- and something is passed between the cars, and then they both leave."

"Have you tried the police?" Paul asked.

"They were polite, but I think they were too busy for my off-the-wall observations. So yesterday, I went over and hid behind the elevator and watched. The cars arrived, but one of the men saw me and started to come over. I ran down the stairwell and got away, but I think he saw me going into my building. I'm afraid he may come after me. I spoke to the building security director, and he recommended I come and see you."

At that moment, a shot came through my office window and struck Grace in the chest. She hit the floor like a sack of wet cement.

To be continued ...

PT

Michigan, Southwest, New York Focus on Networking and Training

Editor's note: This is the first in a series of articles featuring the leaders of regional parking associations. PT will be interviewing parking pros who are members of regional groups throughout the country. In this first article, we spoke with Johnna Frosini and Glen Sicard of "Meeting of the Parking Minds"; Jon Frederick and Khurshid Hoda of the Michigan Parking Association; Melinda Helton of the Southwest Parking Association; and Michael Klein of the New York State Parking Association.

'Meeting of Minds' Stresses Information and Fun – for Free

"We just wanted to give something back," said Johnna Frosini, Parking Supervisor of the State University of New York at Brockport, as she described how she and Glen Sicard of the University of Rochester founded the "Meeting of the Parking Minds" a year ago. "We realized that the reason many can't attend the 'big' shows is due to cost, so we set out to provide a forum for parking information and networking and do it for free."

Frosini and Sicard, whose campuses are about 20 minutes apart, set a date, called some speakers, and then emailed and cajoled about 50 to attend the first session. "It was so successful we decided to hold it again in 2005." This past July, more than 150 people attended the two-day event, with 16 seminars, a barbeque and, according to Frosini, free water, but very few breaks (this is an "in" joke to the attendees).

The two invited the parking business -- universities, colleges, cities, hospitals and the private sector -- and they came. Since they are not an organization, they weren't looking for income, only to provide the service.

"We knew that if we didn't charge, we would have more attendees," Frosini said. "We were able to get some sponsors to cover the costs, but we did everything to keep it inexpensive. We reached out whenever we could; we used the phone and e-mail to keep costs down. It wasn't elegant, but we were able to get the message across; plus, people had a lot of fun."

The second year, the word definitely got out, and they had attendees from all over New York state. The idea is being picked up "downstate" in New York, and will be held in March 2006 at the State University of New York at Purchase.

Helton at Southwest Association Says, 'It Helps Me Move Forward ...'

When asked what was the No. 1 thing her parking association brought to her, Melinda Helton, President of the Southwest Parking Association and Assistant Director of Arizona State University Parking and Transit Services,



said one word: "networking."

"I get a chance to meet and talk to people I don't see every day. Our meetings enable our members to discuss and tackle like problems," Helton said. "Best Practices' are important, but the reason we have jobs is to select the solutions that fit the particular issues at our own organizations. Having discussions at the meetings, whether in formal or social contexts, gives me new ideas; they help me move forward."

The association, according to Helton, gives its members a forum for discussion on specific topics and get specific with solutions to particular problems. The formal sessions focus the discussions; the informal ones allow a brainstorming environment that helps create new ideas.

The educational element is essential, she said, and even though the SWPA has had its first training session only this year, it has been successful.

One attendee, Jill Knowles of the Pima County Parking Services, writing in the SWPA newsletter, said that "one of the nicest things about going to a seminar such as this one is the chance to speak with other parking professionals. We shared a table with the Ace employees from Sky Harbor Airport. Even though they are working a busy airport, and we work providing parking for visitors to downtown Tucson, we all had the same issues. As one of the cashiers put it on the drive home, 'It was nice to be surrounded by people like me.'"

Knowles and the other 100-plus members of the association will have another opportunity for that this month in Reno, where the group is meeting Oct. 11-14.

Front-Line Supers Amazed That They Had Solutions

"Our front-line supervisors were amazed that they had problems as well as solutions," said Jon Frederick of Wayne State University and President of the Michigan Parking Association. "When they attended our training programs," he added, "it was confidence-building for them to realize that they had not only problems, but solutions for other folks in the room".

"Training is our real mandate," said Khurshid Hoda of Walker Parking Consultants and Secretary of the 23-year-old MPA. "We provide front-line training, at no cost, to entry-level staff such as cashiers and attendants." Recent programs have included cashier issues; using and finding proper reports on revenue control systems; and proper cash management procedures and practices.

The Michigan association moves its annual meetings into different geographical areas in the state. The spring